

# Internal ASI company newsletter (I was chief editor)

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# ASI Profile

March 2000

Vol. 2 No. 2

## Carol Bancroft takes the helm

By Renae Killion

When you think of Carol Bancroft, what is the first thought that comes to mind? Is it that big, bright smile? The way she makes everyone feel like they are a part of something that they have a stake in? She makes everyone feel like a family, like they belong.

Carol's abilities to lead come from her upbringing and life experiences that have taught her to spread excitement to others and then watch them flourish with it. What was so special about Carol's life to make her this way? She credits much of it to her parents.

Carol grew up in Hoven, SD, with a large family. Her natural father passed away when she was very young. She was the youngest of 20 siblings, but her mother managed to keep the family going. A business-savvy woman, Carol's mother went into the banking business. That was where she met the man the children consider their father. He was a regular customer at the bank, and when he called Carol's mother for a date, she was like a schoolgirl.

"We watched them from the window to see if they would kiss," Carol said. "They did. They were a beautiful couple."

Carol's father was also business-smart and came out of the 1930's a wealthy man with his registered Hereford cattle business. No one really knew the extent of his wealth because he didn't flaunt it. Instead, he was a strong community leader, helping to build the town and keep it going. He often helped people in Hoven pay for an education if they



**Scheduling woes** - Chris Lumbatis and Carol Bancroft help Tara Richter with some scheduling issues during a busy day at the center.

would stay and work in the community.

"My father loved me and gave me a wonderful home," Carol said of her father. "He was the kindest, gentlest and most soft-spoken man. He made my mother very happy."

Although both of her parents passed away several years ago, the business is still run by the family and Carol holds wonderful memories of them.

One of Carol's best memories as a child was of the ice skating parties with friends and family near the family farm. She describes an enchanting vision of a scenic area on a dam near Hoven, within viewing distance of the cathedral in town.

After graduating from high school, Carol went to Black Hills State University where she earned a business administration degree. She later earned an MBA with an MIS emphasis gradu-

ate degree from the University of South Dakota.

It was during her years in school that she and her husband Dan got together. They had actually grown up about 70 miles away from each other and crossed paths several times. They knew each for about three years and met again at a mutual job. He called and asked her out, but Carol said no. She was in the middle of studying for finals and didn't feel she had the time. She said he took it very personally.

Lucky for Carol, she told a friend about it who then told Carol she was a fool and to call him back and accept the invitation if it was still open. It was, and as Carol put it, "the rest was history." They dated for about one year

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# Internal ASI company newsletter (cont.)

## Bancroft: Parents and family create a leader

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and then married. They just celebrated their 18<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on March 18.

"Dan and I have a very close relationship," Carol said. "I wouldn't be where I am without him."

Dan and Carol have put together a close blended family. They both have children from previous marriages. Dan's daughter Lisa and her husband Curt live in Spearfish. They have two children, Chandler who is 9 and Hunter who is 6. Curt works with manufactured homes and Lisa is a stay-at-home mom.

Ross, Dan's son, also lives in Spearfish. He is currently working as an autobody craftsman. When he was in high school, Ross was in a car accident and went through a long recovery time. Carol said it was a hard time for the family but he has recovered completely now.

Carol's daughter, Jenny, was only 4 years old when Carol and Dan started dating. A running joke in the family is that Jenny proposed to Dan rather than Dan proposing to Carol. On a car ride back from Carol's parent's home shortly after they started dating, Jenny asked Dan if he was going to be her daddy. Carol said Dan took it well. When they did get married, Jenny exchanged vows with them. Jenny still lives in Rapid City and is an account rep for Conseco.

Carol gets along with her stepchildren well and says they are just like her own. Now she is basking in the joys of being a grandmother. She said her favorite past time is to color with her granddaughter, Hunter, chatting with her about school and friends.

When Dan isn't working at his job in the meat department at Albertsons and Carol isn't working, the two enjoy camping, boating and spending time with family. Carol also keeps herself busy as a member of the Rapid City Camber of Commerce. She is always looking for opportunities to volunteer in her community.

"I have a firm belief we give back to the community. That belief comes from my family roots," Carol said.

Carol began her career in banking and investments. She has taught at several different schools, most recently as associate faculty and director of MIS and CIS for National American University for five years. She worked for BHSU in financial aid and for Spiegel in quality and training.

Carol began with ASI as the Systems Manager and quickly moved up to Operations Director of Sales and Systems. Her promotion to Senior Vice President of Warranty Management and Center Manager came after Scott Nash was promoted to another position in the company and left ASI. Troy Belden filled in temporarily until he also left the company for personal reasons. At this point, ASI President Tanya Fratto had to make some decisions and make them fast. Her decision was to position Carol as the center leader.

"One of the greatest honors and privileges I have had was when Tanya asked me to take the job as center manager and that she trusted me to make the right decisions for the team," Carol said.

Now Carol's goal as center manager is to keep the team excited and to motivate them to continue doing what they do so well, stay con-



**Easy on the frosting** - Barbara Starkey and Carol Bancroft, aka Mrs. Claus, frost a cookie at a family day.

sumer-focused. She will also be concentrating on transitioning new businesses into the center and providing more opportunities and challenges to the team.

Carol said she appreciates the more relaxed interactive style of ASI that lets people own their own hotdog stand. This atmosphere is what Carol feels whenever she walks in the building.

"The energy and enthusiasm here are my favorite things about this company," Carol said. "There's a relaxed, take-care-of-business attitude. We realize we work hard but we like to have fun, too. Everyone owns the business so it's not top-driven but associate-driven."

While Carol is busy motivating everyone else to do the best job they can, she in turn is motivated by their accomplishments. She said she enjoys watching people grow and know that in some small or large way she may have been a part of helping them see the inner talent that drives them to reach heights they didn't know they could reach.

Carol also felt it was important for people to understand that she is a spirited person with a high level of energy that often drives her behavior. She has a great spirit of fun that shows in everything she does.

Dedicated to her work with ASI and GE, Carol said she would leave Rapid City if she were asked to take a new position. She and Dan talked about that possibility when Tanya asked her to be center manager, and they agreed that they would be more mobile and commit to GE. However, she is still very family-oriented and said ASI supports that all the way.

It's obvious that Carol thoroughly enjoys her work. She has made the transition from Scott Nash's leadership to her own as smooth as possible. For her, the team always comes first.

"I am most proud of this team's ability to recognize when they need to rise to the occasion in a crisis situation. It's like watching a championship team coming out onto the field," she said. "That can-do attitude keeps coming through. I'm humbled by the presence of everyone here."