

Deborah Crofoot-Morley



Deborah Crofoot-Morley: With a name like that, you just know she's going to be an interesting person. Wait until you hear her job title.

How did Debbye come to be a member of the Rotary Club of Houston? Probably unlike anyone else in the Club. Prior to joining the Club about nine years ago, Debbye was part of a HCC TV channel crew that video-taped every meeting of the Club for one year. Obviously, in that year she got to know the Club pretty well, and it was only natural that she would be asked to become a member. She quickly became involved in the publicity and public relations committees of the Club. Since then, she's been the chair of several committees and has served as a Director for five years. She truly defines the term, "active Club member." She continues to enjoy RCH for both the

friendships she's made, for the incredible diversity of the Club membership and the wide range of opportunities for service offered by the Club.

Debbye has worked at the University of St. Thomas for five years. Her job title? "Director of Major Constituents Institutional Advancement". There's room for little else on her business card. So, what does someone with that job title do? She said she spends a lot of time on the phone and meeting people for lunch and other appointments. All this to make connections with potential benefactors for the University. She works with foundations, corporations, and individuals to bring major financial gifts to the University. A part of this work led to the University's completion of their most successful capital campaign, which raised \$65 million to fund several major building projects and scholarships on the campus.

During her years with the school, it has undergone significant growth and change, and part of that change is a growing contingent of residential students. During a school year the University's roughly 4,000 students are about equally divided between undergraduates and a combination of graduate students and teacher trainees. Guess where about three fourths of the University's biology graduates go every year? Medical school! The University's reputation for academic excellence is growing. For example, its Center for International Studies Study Abroad program was just named as one of the top 20 in the U.S.

Debbye clearly loves the University of St. Thomas and her work there. However, she assured me that she doesn't spend quite all her time working. She's very proud of her two grandsons (4 and 5 years old) and her husband's five grandchildren, and all these kids probably command a healthy chunk of her time. Her hobbies include scuba-diving,

horseback riding, and flying. She and her husband (a pilot and instructor pilot) owned and flew a twin-engine plane for a number of years until heart trouble kept her husband from passing a flight physical. Something you probably don't know about her is that she's jumped out of an airplane (while flying) (with a parachute) (on purpose). Once was enough to scratch that itch!

She hopes that people see her as a good friend, and as someone who can be counted on to do what she says. Sounds like her Rotary experience confirms that. She believes that her strong suit is being able to act as a catalyst, i.e., to bring people and needs together and to help people build positive working relationships. The thing she would change about herself if she could, would be a big increase in that ability. I think that anyone who spends much time with her would be impressed with her gentle, caring, attentive, and giving nature. All this combined with her natural grace and intellect have to make her a perfect fit for her work.

What would she do with a bunch of money? She'd give it to the University of St. Thomas to be used to help more young people realize the benefits of a good education, which she believes is the key to success, responsibility and happiness. She says that what the world needs most is better care of our children, ranging from the way they are educated to the quality of their homes and families.

If you want a really good story, ask her to tell you about how her father (a sometime ballet dancer) and his brother (a contortionist) had a show that traveled around the country before The War. Or, if you just want a delightful lunch companion, sit beside her and engage her in conversation about most anything.