

Carol (Buchenroth) Tomé Distinguished Alumna

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

Fast Facts:

EDUCATION: BS, '79, Communications; MBA Finance, University of Denver
OCCUPATION: Executive Vice President/CFO, The Home Depot
SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Board Chair, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta; Ranked No. 16 in Forbes list of world's most powerful women, 2008; Executive Fellow, Goizueta Business School, Emory University, Atlanta.
FAMILY: Husband, Ramon E. Tomé
OTHER INTERESTS: Gardening, cooking, reading, arts and culture

When dining in a nice restaurant, it is important to know which fork to chose, both literally and figuratively. Carol Tomé, who long ago mastered the manners of a business lunch, also has a gift for choosing the right fork in the road of life.

Tomé started out as a botany major at Colorado State University. She went there because a friend was to attend CSU and the two wanted to go to college together. But after one year in Ft. Collins, Tomé decided it wasn't right for her. She went home to Jackson for the summer and spent time with many of her Wyoming alumni family members, such as her mother, Marion (Waln) Buchenroth (BS '53) and her aunt and uncle Jackie Hoistma (BS '55) and Robert Waln (BS '59) and her sister Anne (Buchenroth) Ashley (JD '83). That's when she decided to give UW a try. She took classes in the College of Arts and Sciences and found she enjoyed many of her communications courses, so chose that as her major field of study.

For awhile, Tomé managed to travel two forks in the road at the same time. Her father, Felix Buchenroth Jr. (BS '52), was then the owner of the Jackson State Bank, the family's business. As a young man he had attended UW for a time then returned to work at the bank, alongside his father. Following the family pattern years later, Tomé worked with her father from time



Carol (Buchenroth) Tomé, Distinguished Alumna

to time and decided it would be a good idea to combine her interest in communications with her ability in finance. She decided to pursue additional education to make that happen.

Tomé isn't sure that students today have as many opportunities to come up in a family business that lasts for generations. Her personal experience in doing so shaped her choices but also didn't last forever. When she was near the end of her graduate studies, her parents divorced and her father sold the bank. "That family business opportunity was gone, but a new opportunity presented itself," she said.

Tomé started her career with the United Bank of Denver (now Wells Fargo) then worked as director of banking for the Johns-Manville Corporation. She started with The Home Depot in 1995, in Atlanta. She is now the chief financial officer and executive vice president

as her business accomplishments are, even more impressive are her strength of character, her generosity, and the role model she sets for all of our associates in Home Depot. We have a description in Home Depot about associates who embody the traits of helping others, giving back to the community, and 'doing the right thing.' We call these our 'orange blooded' associates. Anyone and everyone within Home Depot would describe Carol as our leading 'orange blooded' associate."

Tomé said she embraces the culture at The Home Depot in part because of the opportunities for personal connections it brings her. She credits many of the "cool things" she's done in life to the personal relationships she's been able to cultivate and maintain, and those reach directly into her professional life. She encourages UW students today to use social media they have available to stay in touch with the contacts they make.

One such connection for Tomé has been with Scott Neu (BS '98), who works and lives in Atlanta. He said Tomé was one of the first people he contacted when moving to Atlanta, and she has been a friend and mentor to him since.

"As you might well expect, Carol is highly regarded as a dynamic leader in both the corporate world and the Atlanta community. I have seen her skillfully balance two full-time careers—one as a key leader for The Home Depot and the other as a committed community volunteer. She always gives 100 percent," Neu said, "in all aspects of her life. If she agrees to serve on a board, volunteer for an organization, or take on a project, you can be certain it will be done on time and with a high attention to detail and quality."

Tomé's busy schedule contains numerous examples of volunteerism and service. In addition to those examples listed above, she serves as a member of The Committee of 200 and is a member of the Atlanta Botanical Garden's board of directors. Tomé received the 2009 Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans award from BDN Network and the 2009 CFO of the Year award from the CFO Roundtable.

Tomé said she would love to be even more involved with UW but that living so far away makes it difficult to do so. She said it was a "terrific honor" to join the other accomplished individuals named as UW Distinguished Alumna. ❧

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of corporate services. She provides leadership in the areas of finance, real estate, store construction, financial services, strategic business development, and growth initiatives. The job keeps her on the move every week, traveling around the world for activities such as meetings with investors and suppliers or new store launches.

Home Depot Chairman and CEO Francis S. Blake said: "As impressive