

Lawrence is a woman of many facets

Elin Marcel
Capital Times Staff

Luanne Lawrence was born in an elevator, and her mother, who was in labor for just 15 minutes, said she's been driven ever since.

"When I played Barbies, I wanted Barbie to be a secretary, and finish her typing on time," the striking redhead said emphatically.

Lawrence, acting director of community relations at Penn State Harrisburg, agrees with her mother, describing herself as determined even as a child.

But Barbie's not the only one who

PROFILE

works hard. Lawrence admitted she sometimes pushes herself too much.

"It's my nature to one-up myself," she said. "I'm more competitive with myself than with others."

Her colleagues say Lawrence is capable and hardworking.

"If it doesn't come out right, it's not because she didn't try," said Judy Shank, Community Relations Office secretary. "She gives it her best shot."

Ruth Leventhal, dean and provost at Penn State Harrisburg, said Lawrence has been a valuable addition to the college, empathizing with faculty and students.

"I just think she's a person of surprising breadth and depth," Leventhal said. "She is able to assess what needs to be done. She makes it her business to get it done, and get it done well."

After attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania on a full academic scholarship, Lawrence transferred to Millersville University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in speech communications.

During college, she took part in two internships. Lawrence attributes her career success to the internships, saying they are the best places to make mistakes and learn.

"And believe me, I made mistakes in my internships," she said, shaking her head. "But, that was the place to do it."

She joined the Community Relations Office as assistant to the director in March 1991. One week later, the director resigned, and Lawrence took over the reins as acting director. She's scheduled to become the director in 1993, after



Luanne Lawrence

Photo by Elin Marcel

fulfilling two years of work experience.

Lawrence said she expects to stay at Penn State Harrisburg for at least 10 years, but eventually wants to work in Russian affairs.

As a child, Lawrence developed a fascination with Russia. Her teachers and parents laughed because she maintained Communists were good people. But she

knew eventually she'd do something involving Russian studies.

That's why Lawrence jumped at the chance to join other members of the Penn State Harrisburg community on the Russian tour this month.

"I'm excited beyond belief," exclaimed Lawrence, her bright eyes sparkling.

She said although her luggage is

limited, one suitcase is already crammed with gifts such as Barbie dolls, Ninja Turtles, chocolate, vegetable seeds and pots for planting. She included toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and other toiletries which are hard to come by in Russia.

Lawrence, who is working on her master's degree in training and development, is dedicated to her job, putting in long hours and sometimes skipping lunch breaks.

"She's in here way before eight every day," Shank said. "And here when we're gone at night."

Candy Franks, a junior communications major, said Lawrence is very goal-oriented.

"She takes her career very seriously," said Franks, an intern in the Community Relations Office. "She expects the same thing out of you."

Career choice is far from important to most 14 year olds, but not Lawrence.

At 14, Lawrence freelanced for the York Dispatch. After graduation, she moved to full time, eventually landing a sportswriting position.

"I've always been interested by opportunities that typically don't involve women's participation," Lawrence said.

The other sports reporters treated her like she was young, Lawrence said, and she wanted to prove she could do the job.

She eventually gained their respect and support, but they weren't her only problem.

"The coaches would call me 'honey' and 'sweetie,'" Lawrence said. "They were the biggest obstacle. I had to make it clear that that was unacceptable."

Lawrence not only wrote about sports, she participated. When she was 15, she won a spot on the York Barbell softball team after a six-week tryout. The team traveled to Florida to play in a national contest.

During the game, Lawrence caught a line drive and fractured her thumb. She remained in the game and collided with another player at first base, fracturing her ankle.

Lawrence fills her free time as a disc jockey for Harrisburg's Double Trouble Disc Jockeys. The only female in the company, she has been with them for 2 1/2 years, providing light shows, comedy routines and music.

According to Shank, Lawrence thrives on music. Her colleagues tease her about the rock music playing in her office.

See Lawrence, page 16

Wilson, from page 2

to take up arms to protect themselves when attacked.

"He has the right to his own opinion," said Jim Baker, a communications major. "But, Wilson is a racist just like the people he wants to kill."

Larry Bates, a communications major, said that Wilson's generalizations about white people went too far.

"He should not have said 'people' because that means everyone, and not everyone is like that. He should replace 'people' with 'society' because it is the culture that is racist, not people."

Michael Gallagher, a junior electrical engineering technology major, said, "I think he takes a few facts and distorts them to justify certain negative feelings. This does no good to ease racial tension."

Frank Etchelberger, a junior studying business management, said he viewed Wilson's call for militant self-defense as equivalent to the threats of the Ku Klux Klan.

"We have to start judging people as individuals," said Henry Polce, a junior majoring in criminal justice.

Bates, the communication major, said, "We are not a great melting pot any more. There is too much division."

Need a DJ?

WPSH, "The Voice of Penn State Harrisburg,"
is your answer!



Low Rates!



Call for more information: 948-6396