

# Gender Not A Drawback To Successful Auctioneering Career

LOU ANN GOOD  
*Food And Family  
Features Editor*

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Female auctioneers continue to be somewhat of a novelty in the auctioneer world.

At Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), 75 percent of the students enrolled in auctioneering classes are male.

Charlene Caple did not know of any female auctioneers when she went to auctioneering school in 1978. Although women were involved in the auctioneering business, they generally clerked or assisted the auctioneer.

But Caple wanted to become a licensed auctioneer. She was confident she could handle it.

Although she faced some discrimination while seeking to establish a business, Caple said, "I don't like to focus on male/female issues. Also discriminated against in many areas are blacks, young people, blonds, and white-haired people."

According to Caple, the best solution to counteracting discrimination can be summed up in one sentence: "Deal with it."

She doesn't allow someone else's misconceptions

or opinions to become an issue or a point of debate. "Accept who you are and live with it," Caple said.

Harry Bachman said that when he started auctioneering, there were not any female auctioneers.

"I can say one thing, women are good talkers," he said. "And some of them do a really good job."

In some instances, Caple believes women have an advantage. She said, "Women are often good in interpersonal relationships, which helps in selling (auction) services."

Jill Doherty of New York pushed for the International Auctioneer Conference (IAC) to conduct separate contests for men and women auctioneering.

"I just felt that women sounded different than men, so we should have our own category and it could be a showcase for women because people often assume we are the wife, clerk, or assistant to the auctioneer," Doherty said.

Doherty, who has been auctioneering for 20 years, won the women's division of the 2002 IAC contest. She entered the auction profession at the urging of her father in 1981. She specializes in selling municipal equipment such as police cars and dump trucks.

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