

Latino Leaders

The National Magazine of American Latino

EXCLUSIVE:
INTERVIEW WITH
FASHION DESIGNER
**ISABEL
TOLEDO**

"If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman."
Margaret Thatcher

PLUS:
THE TOP
10
LATINA
ORGANIZATIONS

**THE
WOMEN'S
ISSUE**

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The Justice Professionals

LATINO LEADERS

At the tender age of nine, Sofia Adrogué assumed a tremendous responsibility for a child – she had to act as a translator for her Argentine family, which had recently immigrated to the United States. The experience obviously had little adverse effect on Sofia and probably did her confidence a world of good, because today she is one of the most respected lawyers in Texas.

Sofía

Adrogué

Member, Loper Reed
& McGraw, P.C.

By: Graeme Stewart

Interviewing the glamorous and hard working attorney is an experience in itself, akin to grasping a force of nature.

Sofia was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her parents raised five children, all of whom have followed the family's tradition of post-graduate careers in either medicine or law.

When her family moved to Houston, Sofia graduated from St. Agnes Academy and then Rice University. She then attended the University of Houston Law Center on a competitive full scholarship, graduating in the top 1.5% of her class. Sofia's list of achievements is certainly long and distinguished, which makes her opinions all the more interesting and relevant.

Speaking about what made her decide to pursue a career in Law, an enthusiastic and self assured



"NEVER FORGET WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU COME FROM, AND ALWAYS FIND YOUR PASSION. THEN PURSUE IT WITH PREPARATION, PERSPIRATION, PERSISTENCE, AND PANACHE."

Sofía replies, "The United States is the land of opportunity, where meritocracy and egalitarianism flourish. Clearly, in my family, a post-graduate education was merely a rite of passage. All five of my parents' children are either doctors or lawyers. As a lawyer, I can serve as an advocate, as a facilitator, and as a conciliator, resolving a litany of issues, from the simplest to the most complex. Being a lawyer has been most fulfilling."

Without skipping a beat, Sofía swiftly moves on to discuss the current economic crisis and how she has tackled the challenge. "As a member (partner) of Looper Reed & McGraw, P.C., I handle business litigation and consultation, utilizing, if appropriate and feasible, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to solve conflicts. As we all face economic contraction, I adhere to what others have noted - that our legal profession stands at a crossroads of opportunity - and I am prepared for the challenge and hopeful of commensurate success."

Her advice to young Latinas in these economically depressed times also comes with her typical forthrightness. "Never forget who you are and where you come from, and always find your passion. Then pursue it with preparation, perspiration, persistence, and panache. During this time of economic turmoil, if feasible, Latinas should focus on skills training and intellect building whether through community colleges or the university."

Still, the lack of minority representation in her line of business is something that concerns her. "Minorities have remained widely underrepresented in the legal profession across the Nation," she says. "I have been historically one of the few, if not the

only, Hispanic female professional in my law school, and, subsequently, in my work place. Ideally, in the forthcoming years, we will see a more inclusive and diverse legal community. I think this is of reciprocal benefit. I do believe that being a Latina lawyer in Texas does create a position of differentiation and 'uniqueness' where, with all else being equal, it may be an added 'plus.'"

Asked who her greatest mentors are, Sofía is

quick to add, "First, my nuclear family, starting with my father, Dr. Horacio J. Adrogué, a Tenured Professor at Baylor College of Medicine, who together with my mother, Sara Adrogué, immigrated with five young children and 14 suitcases in pursuit of the American dream. They had the greatest initial impact. The values of education, labor, faith, humility, and positive attitude are their indelible marks. They first taught me about 'summit climbing'.

"Today, my nuclear family, my husband, Sten Gustafson, my two daughters, Sloane and Schuyler, and my son, Stefan, now provide me the base from which to successfully climb and, ideally, one

day, reach the summit."

Sofía says that her story is a story of intense work, passion and also a little bit of luck. "For me, happiness is not an accident," she says. "Nor is it something you wish for. Happiness is something you design. We all have two choices: we can make a living or we can design a life. Therefore, 'Carpe Diem' and 'Shake it up!' At the end, I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work, the more I live."

And with that, the dynamo that is Sofía Adrogué has said it all. ■

