

## ‘Fashion and function’

**Ron White, women's shoe guru** ‘As a shoe retailer now for more than 18 years, I have spent much of my work life with women — particularly those who work hard and are on their feet all day and on the go. Just as in their lives — women are wanting it all and going after it — in their shoes, it's fashion combined with function. Women are no longer willing to sacrifice one for the other — and I agree; why should they? Women are choosing to look great and express their personal style while wielding power in the boardrooms of the nation. I've seen such a change over the last two decades — and it gives me great pride to play a role in this social progress.’



## ‘Choice to do it all’

**Jeanne Beker, fashion journalist** ‘When I was a little kid, my mom was a stay-at-home mom — I think most moms were at that time. You kind of pitied the kids whose moms worked or had a career. As I grew older, gaining more independence, it was different. I started feeling badly for her. When my sister and I grew older and left the house, I knew that she was forlorn because she built her entire life around us. I wasn't going to do that. I always knew I wanted to be mom, but growing up I realized that I definitely wanted a career, too. I didn't have to live a conventional lifestyle. That would be nice, but there are ways of living happily ever after. I had a choice to get out there and do it all.’

## ‘Stand up for myself’

**Mary Jo Eustace, host of PROUD FM morning show** ‘Being lucky enough to grow up in a free and democratic society, I was never really confronted with the fact that I may be less than a man because I was a woman. On the contrary, I was taught to stand up for myself and to never limit my agenda because I just happened to be female. I was also aware that these privileges had come at a cost to many women before me who had fought long and hard for the equalities that I enjoy in my lifetime. We must never take for granted our freedoms — history shows us what a foolish mistake that could be.’



## ‘For & by ourselves’

**Ann Layton, president of Siren Communications** ‘The first wave of change that benefitted me was in my education. I attended London School of Economics where I did a master's in economics. By the time I graduated, women were entering the corporate workforce at a management level. The change that affected me most of all, however, was part of an international trend. Women are taking everything they learned in the corporate world and adapting it to a dynamic new business model that takes into account the reality of blending family and career. Today, I run my own company, and it is the most fun I have had in my entire career. The greatest surprise for me was learning that there is life after the corporate world, and most importantly, women can do it for — and by — ourselves.’

## ‘Still have work to do’

**Ruby Dhalla, MP for Brampton-Springdale** ‘As a woman from an ethnic community and the youngest woman in Parliament, I am reminded every day of the work that still needs to be done to increase the number of women engaged in the political process to ensure our voices, needs and concerns are reflected in government policies and programs. One only has to take a look at the House of Commons, in which only 20% of those elected are women even though women account for over 50% of our population. We must work together as a nation to ensure that we identify, recruit and mentor women to seek political office to help to ensure that there is true equality. We still have work to do — perhaps an “explosion of choice” is still needed.’



## ‘Radically different’

**Traci Melchor, MuchMoreMusic personality** ‘I remember once when I was interviewing comedian Jerry Lewis, he quipped “What's a little lady like you doing asking big-boy questions like that?” Lewis was still living in the '50s. Thanks to the hard work of the women of my mother's generation, things are radically different now. Today, I'm inspired when I see strong and determined women like Oprah Winfrey running a billion-dollar business and Beyoncé brimming with sexuality and smarts, tearing up the stage and controlling her brand. For me personally, more choices mean fewer limitations: I can be a busy TV personality and a mom. Most of all, I am excited about the opportunities for my daughter because women continue to work tirelessly to make things even better.’