

The Renaissance

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Debbi Fields; at the Renaissance Theatre, March 10, 2009, 7:00 PM

Debbi Fields was born on September 18, 1957 as Debra Jane Sivyver in Oakland, California. She was the youngest of five daughters to her welder father and housewife mother. She was not especially gifted as a youngster, but, as she said, she learned to work as hard as the next person.

As a kid she loved making cookies because she enjoyed the sense of satisfaction from family and friends. So when she was 13 years old and got her first job at \$5 per week, she used this money to buy 'real' ingredients to use for baking her cookies - vanilla, butter, chocolate chips.

She married Randy Fields, a Stanford graduate, when she was 19 years old and was relegated to the role of housewife. She found it difficult at social gatherings when friends would ask what she was doing for a life and then their patronizing looks when she had nothing to answer.

1977 she decided she would open a cookie shop and did just that - with, amazingly, the backing of a banker in this untried concept as an inexperienced 20 year old. On August 16, 1977, Mrs. Fields Chocolate Chippery first opened its doors in Palo Alto, California. Halfway through her first day she had not made a single sale, so she went outside and started handing out her cookies for free. Soon people were streaming in to the shop to buy more of her cookies.

Her company motto "Good enough never is," says all about her business philosophy. She worked hard and her customer satisfaction was a priority. That, and the great cookies she baked. She later changed the company name to Mrs. Fields Cookies to allow for other type of cookies rather than just chocolate chip.

One of the business innovations she introduced was the state-of-the-art computer systems in 1989 for streamlining her company operations. Soon after that, in 1990, she started franchising the business concept. In 1993 she eventually sold out to private investors and turned her attention to motherhood.

Debbi Fields continues to stretch herself and face her fears. To this end she joined the Toastmasters organization and has earned the Golden Gavel award that is awarded annually to the individual that demonstrates consistent self-improvement, success and leadership.

In 1997, she divorced her long time husband and remarried in 1998 to Michael Rose and moved to Memphis, Tennessee. She has five daughters from her first marriage, Jessica, Jenessa, Jennifer, Ashley and McKenzie, and five from her husband's previous marriage.



Besides being a Harvard Business School case study on business efficiency, Debbi Fields has authored various books including the "Mrs. Fields Cookie Book: 100 Recipes from the Kitchen of Debbi Fields" - the first cook book to make it to the top of the New York Times bestseller list. She also conducts various seminars and sits on the boards of the Outback Steakhouse, The Orpheum Theatre and EmergeMemphis - a business incubator in Memphis. She also keeps a 'dream sheet' of things she still wants to do and accomplish.

Debbi Fields is a shining example of a woman that realized the American dream. From humble beginnings she went on to make it big. She lived and persevered through the unbelief of the naysayers and achieved something that most believed as impossible - a successful cookie business, big business. So after all is said and done, you have to admit Debbi Fields Rose is one smart (and tough) cookie!

Source: www.financial-inspiration.com/Debbi-Fields-biography.html



Mrs. Debbi Fields, founder

Mrs. Fields' Original Cookies, Inc. bakes and sells specialty cookies, brownies, pretzels, and other baked goods. From one store started by Debbi and Randy Fields in 1977, the firm has expanded to over 1,500 stores named Mrs. Fields' Original Cookies, the Great American Cookie Company, the Original Cookie Company, Pretzel Time, Hot Sam, and Pretzelmaker. This is a true success story of an American homemaker and her husband who overcame numerous obstacles to create an international business. However, like many companies that began as family businesses, it reorganized under outside leadership and ownership. The firm's chocolate chip cookies were so popular that they became the subject of a modern urban legend in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Source: www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Mrs-Fields-Original-Cookies-Inc-Company-History.html

Books written by Debbie Fields

Debbi Fields' Great American Desserts: 100 Mouthwatering Easy-to-Prepare Recipes

One Smart Cookie

Mrs. Fields' Cookie Book

Mrs. Fields' I Love Chocolate Cookbook

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