



Crossroads at Eden

A third-gen entrepreneur finds her calling where family and business intersect

Job hunting in 2009 was not ideal. In the midst of the Great Recession and fresh out of college, Sarah Duwe could not find a job.

“The job market in ‘09 was not pretty,” Duwe, a human resources major, said. “I had a lot of friends that went on to grad school, but I was running out of time, money and resources. I wanted to get out in the working world, but nobody was hiring.”

During the spring semester of her senior year, she called her mom to share her worries. Her mom reminded her there was a job for her at the family business, Schumann’s Inc., a ladies apparel store back home in Eden, Texas.

The youngest of three Baylor-graduate daughters, Sarah grew up at Schumann’s and knew her path would lead there eventually. Her mom, Paula, brought her to work almost every day, from the time she was still in a bassinet in the front window (earning the moniker “window baby” from customers) to hanging out after-school as a teen. It was home.

“I knew I’d eventually join the family business, but I never dreamed it’d be this fast,” she said. “Mom

said, ‘Come here and stay as long as you need to. Do interviews while you work.’”

So, she did. Sarah graduated on Saturday, moved back home on Sunday and started at Schumann’s on Monday. Meanwhile, the job hunt continued, until one day, she found a crumpled piece of paper in some décor she inherited from her MeMe, her maternal grandmother and the founder of the store. It was a bible verse, Luke 11:9: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

“I’m a woman of faith, and I believe God’s timing is never wrong,” Duwe said. “That is a sign from MeMe. I decided to quit fighting this and quit looking for something else. That was her way of speaking to me. I thought, ‘This is what I’m supposed to be doing.’”

Duwe became the third generation of Schumann women to help run the business. In August 1967, in a time when the bank refused to issue a loan without her husband as the co-signer, MeMe, also known as Helen Schumann, started the business in Eden. She ran the store until her retirement in 1984, when her daughter (Sarah’s mother, Paula) quit her job as a home economics teacher to take over the business.

In 1999, under Paula’s leadership, Schumann’s opened a second location in Marble Falls, and in 2016, a third in San Angelo. The San Angelo store is Sarah’s baby—from initial concept to renovations to the day-to-day management of the store. Although she still has her roots in Eden, Sarah runs the San Angelo location.

“The San Angelo store kind of solidified all we’ve worked for,” Sarah said. “Three generations. Three stores. I feel like we are complete.”

Schumann’s has come a long way in its 50 years and it continues to evolve—from one location to three, from Helen’s handwritten inventory books to the Facebook page Sarah manages where customers from South Korea to Kentucky can (and do) buy directly from the site. To top it off, in 2016, as they prepared for their 50th year in business, Schumann’s got a little more to celebrate. They were nominated for and won the State of Texas Small Business Award from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott.

“My plan now is let’s do another 50 years! I want to follow my grandmother and mother’s traditions.”

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