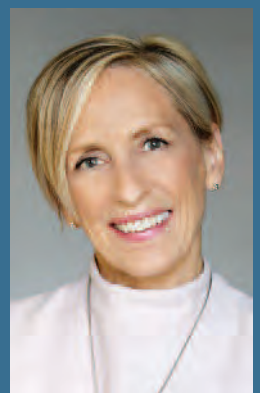


VENUES TODAY 2017

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE



Kim Damron
Donna Julian
Michele Montague
Marla Ostroff
Debra Rathwell

Empowering Others

Kim Damron is most proud of the Paciolan company culture, which puts family first

by LINDA DECKARD



"I want to work here for the rest of my career, and I'm not that old." — KIM DAMRON

EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES TO OWN THEIR JOB AND MOVE THE DIAL, combined with fostering a company culture that emphasizes work/life balance, are the hallmarks of the leadership style of Kim Damron, president and COO of Paciolan.

She has been on the fast track her whole career and, because of her accomplishments and her flair, is among the 2017 *Venues Today* Women of Influence.

Damron joined Paciolan 11 years ago, upon meeting with Dave Butler, CEO, and realizing his vision and her vision meshed wonderfully. She was ambitious but balanced, planning a family and expecting to have time to serve them as well. And she loves Orange County. Paciolan is headquartered in Irvine, Calif.

She grew up in Costa Mesa, Calif., and attended the University of Southern California from which both of her parents graduated. "And USC was our first client ever at Paciolan," she said. How copacetic is that, though, of course, she wasn't at Paciolan at the time. However, she has embraced it fully, history and all.

Thinking she would become a sportscaster, she interned at PrimeTicket. "The great thing about internships is you experience what the job is like; in college you don't know what you want." She learned she did not want to be a sportscaster.

Her next internship, in 1993, was at Paramount Studios, her senior year. "It's funny because I went to work for a woman, the SVP of media for all advertising of motion pictures. She offered me her assistant job, which was open in January. I wasn't graduating until May. She said, 'I'm not going to wait for you and I am who I am and I'm a bitch and I'm not going to change for you.'"

That was Damron's welcome to Hollywood and she learned a lot from her boss and mentor, Susan Wrenn, about how to be a powerful woman in business, how to manage relationships, and "the main thing — how to survive in Hollywood. It's such a cutthroat industry. But you can get to the top if you want to, man or woman."

After more than four years with Paramount, Damron got the itch to explore the Internet of things. "It's such an exciting space, really the biggest thing since the industrial revolution," she believed then and now.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 →

CONGRATULATIONS

KIM DAMRON

Recipient of the prestigious
2017 Women of Influence Award



From Your Proud Partners at

TicketsWestTM

EMPOWERING OTHERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

In 1999, she joined Buy.com, an Amazon competitor. She was hired to help build the entertainment store, to run the business side, working with key vendors and distributors. And the best thing, it got her back to Orange County. “I love Southern California,” she emphasizes again and again.

She stayed at Buy.com through its Initial Public Offering, until the company went private again. She witnessed its growth to \$500 million in sales in the first year. It was on the cover of *Fortune* magazine. “It was a fantastic run. I learned so much about the Internet and about cutting deals. We did the first linking deal with eBay. Internet advertising was new in 1998.” She left and spent a brief year consulting for eBay, but decided against moving to San Jose, so she looked around.

Tickets.com was based in Costa Mesa, and had just named Ron Bension CEO. “I reached out and they hired me. I stayed there through the MLBAM acquisition,” Damron said. She was VP of marketing and business.

Then Paciolan recruited her. She wasn’t really looking to move, but she certainly had to entertain the offer. She met Dave Butler for lunch and was so impressed she joined nine days later. Butler had joined Paciolan in August 2005. Damron came on board in December 2005.

“I just loved Dave’s vision and leadership. I hadn’t even talked about titles, money or anything when I told my husband, ‘I’m going with this company,’” she said.

Managers have been mentors for Damron all along the way, which may be why she is so fiercely involved in mentoring those she manages. “The number one reason people quit their jobs is who they’re working for, not where they’re working,” she said. “In my career, I have been lucky to work for fantastic mentors and managers.”

That’s the message she has when she speaks at a class at University of California — Irvine on international business. “The first thing I tell them is when you are being interviewed by a potential employer, you interview them as well. Are they going to empower you, are you going

to be able to grow with this person?”

Damron, who is married to Jeff Damron, is also a huge supporter of work/life balance. The Damrons have four children: Taylor, 19; Paige, 16; Abby, 9; and Blake, 7. It’s a very busy household.

When Damron had her first baby (two came with the marriage), she had a rocky return to work. “If it weren’t for Lisa Chinn in our development organization, I probably wouldn’t be here today,” she admitted. “I couldn’t balance career, daycare, all those things, and sleep deprivation as well. We bonded over the timing of the birth of our kids.”

Chinn’s support (and it was mutual) made Damron realize there is a need for mentoring among women, so she started a monthly get together for the women at Paciolan. She bought them all a copy of the book “Lean In,” and each woman picked a mentor within the company, just to get the female perspective to help them in their careers. “From my experience that was critical...having a confidante.”

She began to feel okay about being a working mom.

Her answer personally and professionally is to make your children’s big moments a priority. She encourages all Paciolan employees to be with family at those times it matters most.

Damron is very excited about the Learfield’s acquisition of Paciolan this month, noting they are very invested in the arts as well as college sports, having bought MogoARTS, with 200 clients of which 160 are performing arts clients, prior to buying Paciolan.

Learfield is focused on live entertainment, she said. They also own ANC and GoVision, scoreboard/leaderboard companies.

Damron’s ascendancy to the presidency of Paciolan has been precipitous. Jane Kleinberger, Paciolan founder, recalls that day when she learned Butler would be sidelined for health reasons for a time, and she was asked to step back in and lead. Her first executive decision was to bring Damron more deeply into the management picture.

“I find her to be one of the most exceptional manager/leaders that I’ve had the pleasure to work with,” Kleinberger said. “Unlike

many of us, including myself, Kim has a way of holding people accountable and holding herself accountable. If she says she will do it, she will do it. If someone else says they’ll do it, she expects them to. If they don’t, she will always go back and confront them. Those she’s hardest on care the most about delivering the best. She’s consistent and clear with everyone. You always know where she stands.”

One of the first things Damron did as president was promote Craig Ricks, Steve DeMots, Christian Lewis, Deanna Barnes and Lisa Langam, the core team she’d been working with for 10 years. “I think I empower people to run their business and department. I mentor them more than manage them,” Damron said.

Ricks, SVP of Marketing, confirms that Damron is about empowerment. “She is the best boss. She empowers all of us to step up, take on more responsibility and own our role.

When Damron joined Paciolan, she gradually took over departments — ecommerce, marketing and then, “a few years ago, Dave promoted me to COO, giving me customer support and tech operations, professional services, everything except finance, accounting and development, which Dave ran.” This year, Butler promoted her to president. He is CEO, working on the strategy. All of the business now reports to Damron.

She never thought, early on, that she would be running a ticketing company. “What I love is the vision, leadership and culture here, I’ve never been anywhere 11-12 years, not even elementary school. And I want to work here for the rest of my career, and I’m not that old. I feel lucky I work with these people every day.”

John Herr, her first boss, is one of those mentors who made a big difference in Damron’s career. “He was the first person who actually told me, ‘you can run a company one day.’ When he said that, I thought, what is he talking about?”

He told her the key to her future growth was simple. “Just get out of the weeds. You’re so into detail; you need to empower your team and think more big picture. It’s the best advice anyone gave me.”

Clearly, Kim Damron got out of the weeds. 

CONGRATULATIONS KIM DAMRON!



**Recipient of the
2017 Women of
Influence.**

Your Paciolan family
is proud of you!

Paciolan

A LEARFIELD COMPANY

The Balancing Act

From intern to SVP, Donna Julian fights for work/life balance and wins

by LINDA DECKARD



“As soon as I did that internship at the Cap Centre — which had all the hockey, basketball, events and Georgetown — I got the bug. I knew instantly I want to do what I can to get into this arena thing.” — DONNA JULIAN

HAVING A PERSONAL LIFE WHEN WORKING IN THE SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE, but it's a battle you have to fight.

“I've tried to do it always. Once you decide you will have kids, you have to find some way of balancing it out in this crazy business we're in,” declared Donna Julian, SVP, arena and event operations/GM of Spectrum Center, Charlotte, N.C., and *Venues Today* 2017 Woman of Influence.

Julian has been on the fast track since she fell in love with the arena business while interning at Capital Centre, Landover, Md., for Centre Management in 1984. “As soon as I did that internship at the Cap Centre — which had all the hockey, basketball, events, and Georgetown — I got the bug. I knew instantly I want to do what I can to get into this arena thing,” recalled Julian. Until then, she had thought she would do something in sports, having gone to Ohio University on a tennis scholarship.

In 1990, she became assistant GM at Baltimore Arena (now Royal Farms Arena), while still working for Centre Management. In 1998, always on the fast track, she became GM. By that time she was working for SMG, which bought the management contract from Abe Pollin's Centre Management.

Those 14 years in Baltimore sealed the deal for Julian, who developed a network of mentors and friends and family there who serve her well to this day.

Her mother, Loretta Patterson, is first on the list of mentors. “She was a working mother when I was in school and helped me with balancing mother and businesswoman. She is an instinctive, good manager. I could call her today and bounce ideas off of her.”

Hank Abate, now with Madison Square Garden, New York, is a tremendous resource for Julian. “Hank is just such a great balance of business, operations and customer service knowledge. He showed me how to juggle all three of those things to be successful,” Julian said. Gary Handelman, who handled operations at Centre Management, was another mentor to Julian.

Mike Evans, now with Live Nation, dates back to Julian's Maryland days when he ran Music Centre Productions and is a great source of advice, she said.

Evans is impressed with Julian as well. “Donna is a consensus

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 →



WE PROUDLY
CONGRATULATE ALL OF
venues
TODAY
WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

UNITED TALENT AGENCY

Los Angeles New York London Nashville Toronto Miami Malmö

WWW.UNITEDTALENT.COM

THE BALANCING ACT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

builder. She wants everyone's opinion, then makes her choice. I've gotten mad at her, wanting her to make a decision now, but she's not going to do it. In the end, we're all better for it."

Evans also claims matchmaker in his relationship to Julian. "I introduced her husband to her. I still think of her as Donna Patterson sometimes. David was running a "Bring the Ball Back to Baltimore" campaign after the Colts moved."

Her husband now works in the Foundation department at UNC Charlotte.

"He's wonderful support," she said. "I could never do what I am without him." Her son Griffin, 19, is in his first year of college at East Carolina University, Greenville; and son Donovan, 16, is going into 11th grade. The younger one has a little bit of an interest in the business, "but they're into other things, which is totally fine. I want them to have a passion for what they end up doing."

She attributes her love for sports to her late dad, Mulda Patterson, a huge fan who took her to every game in Baltimore as a child. "I really credit my father for my love of sports. We listened to sports on the radio. It was the foundation of my life," she said of her childhood.

Sports means competition, camaraderie, team effort, all of which translate into business, Julian said. "It's about people coming together for a common goal. I like winning."

Julian defines herself as goal oriented. "For me it was clear, once I knew I loved arena stuff, that I wanted to be an arena manager; I just drove people crazy. I was eager to do what I could. And Baltimore happened. Timing is everything. I had a connection to Baltimore and they just gave me a shot so I'd stop driving them crazy."

She learned the business side of arena management from one of Baltimore city's finance pros and fiscal responsibility from SMG's finance department.

To get results, you must understand flow sheets and financial statements, she said. And you must network. Julian is somewhat of a sponge, soaking up every detail she can and applying it in her own way.

When Centre Management sold its Baltimore contract to SMG, it also sold its Cleveland contract, which brought Marty

"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood... so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat." — TEDDY ROOSEVELT

Bechtold, now with the Indiana Pacers and Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, more firmly into Julian's life in Baltimore.

Bechtold calls Julian "a genuinely nice person and incredibly bright. Donna sees all sides of an issue and is a great consensus builder."

But beyond that, she is wired to keep a work/life balance. All her mentors and coworkers pointed out that Julian has taught them, through example, how to maintain a strong personal as well as professional life. "She has that balance totally squared away," Bechtold said.

One of Julian's goals was to work in a National Basketball Association (NBA) or National Hockey League (NHL) arena. When Barry Silberman, one of her bosses back at Centre Management, was hired to open the new Charlotte, N.C., arena, he brought her into the fold. "We fell in love with Charlotte," Julian said of her family.

Julian prides herself on being a good communicator and a good listener. "I realize it is a team effort. You hire good people and you work for a common goal."

She also thinks things through, preferring to not always be reactionary, despite the pressure to do that in the music side of the arena business.

Opening Spectrum Center (Time Warner Cable Arena at the time) with the Rolling Stones was phenomenal for Julian. "I had never been involved in preopening of a major building. Then a couple days later, the team played its first game. It was awesome."

Another highlight was hosting the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. "I do love the collaboration of people coming together to get this thing done," she said. And getting it done took a year and a half of multitasking.

"On the music side of things, you want to feel like you have some control, but you really don't. Some people are touring, some aren't. You have to be ready to jump on something." She feels like she has a little more control with the NBA's Charlotte Hornets, except for what happens on the court.

"You can control the experience in the building. We put a lot of effort into our training. We empower our staff and spend a lot of time with touchpoints with Levy [Restaurants] and other partners. We put everyone in the same room so we're speaking the same language."

Julian inspires the troops to take chances and put themselves out there, sharing a Theodore Roosevelt quote with all new hires from Brene Brown's "Daring Greatly."

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat." — Teddy Roosevelt, speaking at the Sorbonne in Paris, April 23, 1910

"That's so simple, but yet it makes sense. You can probably feel okay about doing something, even if you fall short, but at least you tried," Julian said. She encourages employees to make suggestions; to take chances. 🌐

A portrait of Donna Julian, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark, sequined jacket over a patterned top. The background is a dark blue gradient with numerous bright, out-of-focus purple and white stars.

Congratulations

**DONNA
JULIAN**



venues
TODAY

2017 Women of Influence Winner

Spectrum CENTER



HORNETS
SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Student Turned Teacher

Michele Montague is the epitome of influence in her venue, her classroom and her industry

by BRAD WEISSBERG



WHEN MICHELE MONTAGUE WAS YOUNG SHE THOUGHT SHE'D BE A PSYCHOLOGIST OR PSYCHIATRIST. She was derailed from that career when her only two 'C' grades at the University of Oregon, Eugene, were in Psychology 101 and 102. "I knew pretty quickly it was not meant to be," said Montague.

What was meant to be was a lifelong career in the venue world, which Montague started at the top after nabbing a job with family entertainment giant, Feld Entertainment, in 2000, as a promoter. "I started part time for Steve Brown when the circus was coming to town," said Montague. "Then I got picked up by Bill Powell's team and moved to Dallas."

She stayed with Feld for four years. "They taught me everything," she said. "I did every town in Texas that you could come up with. I promoted Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City and, eventually, got promoted to Washington, D.C.," Feld Entertainment headquarters at the time.

The move to D.C. led Montague to her next position, which was as a director of marketing for the Washington Wizards. She worked with the Wizards for two and a half years, after which she went back to Feld Entertainment.

"When I was in college I wanted to be a director of marketing," explained Montague about her decision to return to Feld after getting her dream job with the Wizards. "I was all of 26 and I thought, 'now what?'" The kicker, for Montague, was the social media world that was exploding around her. "Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were all coming on strong and started to become a vital part of the job — but it wasn't me from a marketing position."

Montague also didn't exactly love dealing with the players. "I never imagined that I'd have to sit there and hand-hold a player just to get the player to show up at things," she said.

A chance meeting with her old colleague at Feld, Mark Duryea, gave her the opportunity to get back to the part of the business she did love. "I realized that the negotiating, the analysis, the contracts and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54 →

"Better to be prepared than to be surprised." — MICHELE MONTAGUE



CONGRATULATIONS
ON BEING NAMED A
2017
WOMAN OF
INFLUENCE

MICHELE MONTAGUE

Vice President, Events

Assistant General Manager, Verizon Center



THE  **FAMILY IS PROUD OF YOU!**

MONUMENTAL
SPORTS+ENTERTAINMENT



Client Relations Genius

The direct approach has served Ticketmaster's Marla Ostroff well

by LINDA DECKARD



HAVING SPENT HER EARLY YEARS IN TICKETING with the now defunct Ticketron, and later learning a lot about business and client relations from scions like Irving Azoff and Fred Rosen, Marla Ostroff is a legend in the ticketing world. She even hired her current boss, Jared Smith, president of North American operations for Ticketmaster.

"The key is in hiring well and making sure you don't feel you are the only one who can answer something," she said of coping with her current role of managing Ticketmaster's national and theater accounts. "I have to sometimes make sure the clients know they can go to other people. Jared used to work for me, so obviously it works, because no one has trouble going to Jared."

Today, Ostroff, a *Venues Today* 2017 Woman of Influence, whose TM clients include Madison Square Garden, SMG, Feld Entertainment and the Nederlander organization, operates out of Ticketmaster's Northeast office in New York City, a town she has called home for a long time. That high profile clientele is "game, set, match," said Mike Evans, Live Nation. "Marla has a special relationship with clients."

Irving Azoff, Azoff Music Group/Oak View Group, agrees so heartily that he was the one who lured Ostroff back to Ticketmaster after a year-long hiatus. At the time, Azoff was chairman of Live Nation, which owned Ticketmaster.

"I've known Marla all the way back to the Fred Rosen-era at Ticketmaster," Azoff said. "When I arrived at Ticketmaster, she had moved on and I had to track her down get her to come back."

Why? "I don't care what the assignment is, then or now, she's a can-do person. She understands how to make clients happy," Azoff

CONTINUED ON PAGE 55 →

"The key is in hiring well and making sure you don't feel you are the only one who can answer something." — MARLA OSTROFF



CHEERS TO YOU, MARLA!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND LEADERSHIP.

**VENUES TODAY'S
'WOMEN OF INFLUENCE'
CLASS OF 2017!**

MARLA OSTROFF, TICKETMASTER



ticketmaster®

Live Touring's Secret Sauce

Debra Rathwell grew from a small town upbringing in Quebec to running AEG's New York empire

by BRAD WEISSBERG



DEBRA RATHWELL IS NOT THE SORT OF WOMAN WHO WAS DESTINED TO HAVE WHAT WAS ONCE CALLED “A WOMAN’S JOB.” She was always a voracious reader, which is how she learned about careers that weren’t exactly what was expected from a girl who grew up in Gatineau Hills, Quebec.

“I wanted to be a literary agent or editor at a publishing house,” said Rathwell. “I read about careers that should have been impossible for me to consider. I think that girls at that time were supposed to go to school and study to be a teacher, nurse or a flight attendant, but I didn’t want to be any of those things. I wanted a job that involved books and academia.”

Rathwell never set out to get into the live music space; she stumbled in. “In my last year at Carleton University in Ottawa, my roommate was a woman who was a singer-songwriter, and I really liked all of her musical friends and the music scene,” she said. “Harvey Glatt, the chairman of a concert company, rock radio station and Treble Clef record stores needed an executive assistant. I applied for the job and made sure that he knew that I could do everything, though I think he hired me as there weren’t too many Canadian college students who read the Sunday New York Times.”

In 1982, Donald K. Donald, a promoter in Montreal, offered Rathwell a job with the title of vice president and a substantial raise, so she moved to Montreal and stayed there for the next 12 years.

“Donald K. Donald was a master promoter/impresario and he taught me everything,” she said. “He laid the foundation for the sort of promoter that I am today.”

Rathwell recalled Donald making her “sit at his desk for six

“I think that girls at that time were supposed to go to school and study to be a teacher, nurse or a flight attendant, but I didn’t want to be any of those things.”
— DEBRA RATHWELL

months while he tortured me into a deep understanding about how the business works and how to operate in it. I will be forever grateful to him for taking the time and putting in the effort to give me a solid foundation and the expertise to be a concert promoter.”

In 1994, Rathwell bid au revoir to Montreal and moved to New York City, where she worked for John Scher and Jim Koplik at Metropolitan Entertainment.

Koplik is now the President of Live Nation, Connecticut/Upstate New York. He hired Rathwell the moment he heard she was picking up roots and moving to the U.S. “I’ve known Debra for over 30 years,” said Koplik. “She was a superstar in Canada, and I knew she’d be a superstar in America, too.”

“Debra is an aggressive, smart person, which is the secret sauce in this business,” he said. “She wins people over quite easily. She thinks about the business 24/7. Debra has the ability to talk to the artists from a perspective of touring as their main asset.

“As good as she is at running the AEG NYC office, Debra’s real mark is the number of tours that she was able to get, which is not easy. You have to convince the manager, the agent and the artist to go in one direction.”

Koplik recalled his favorite Debra Rathwell tale. “Debra got the idea of buying a set of dates in the Northeast for Metropolitan,” he recalled with amusement. “The first one she went after was Joe Cocker. There were 10 shows we bought, of which seven were wildly successful. Three were not doing as well, but over the 10, we were going to make nice money. But it bothered Debra so much that we were going to lose money on three that she went after the manager and the agent, very aggressively, and we ended up making money on 10 out of 10. In a business of win and lose, Debra doesn’t accept the lose part.”

The job at Metropolitan Entertainment lasted until December 2002 when the company was sold. “Even though Debra moved to a competitor, we’ve stayed friends and I see her often,” said Koplik. “

“I didn’t want to work for SFX or Live Nation or whatever the entity was called then,”

“About midway through my career I stopped subscribing to ‘magical thinking’ — which is when you book risky shows with little upside. It takes a lot of time and experience to get to ‘just saying no’ and being okay with that decision.” — DEBRA RATHWELL

said Rathwell. “So I called Randy Phillips at AEG. He was supportive and I opened the AEG New York City office with eight former employees in January 2013.”

Fourteen years later, Rathwell is SVP of the office she built from the ground up.

“The company had expanded to about 45 employees before becoming Bowery Presents and doubling in size to 90 employees this year.”

In between, Rathwell carved out a reputation as a savvy talent spotter and touring genius. She brought great international stars like Justin Bieber, Carrie Underwood and Celine Dion to AEG. She picked up on tours that others didn’t see much worth in, like “American Idol” and “Dancing with the Stars.”

Rathwell took delight in telling the tale of how she saw the opportunity of the “American Idol” tour while others scoffed. “Apparently I was the last person that Jeff Frasco at CAA spoke to about the possibility of touring ‘American Idol’ in North America,” Rathwell recalled. “Everyone else had turned him down when he finally called me.” Of course, as it turned out, “Idol” was a smash-hit and people were clamoring to see the idols live in concert.

“We had a great run with this property,” she said with satisfaction.

Rathwell said her favorite part of her job was seeing tickets sell. “When you put a tour on sale and it sells boatloads of tickets on the on-sale, there just isn’t anything better than that,” she said gleefully. “I also like working on shows and creating marketing initiatives and promotions that will help to sell tickets. As we all know, sellouts are rare and very special.”

Rathwell acknowledged that her daily

routine is not filled with glory. “Every day seems to be filled with problems of one sort or another,” she said. “If you don’t like solving problems and defusing contentious situations, then this isn’t the job for you.”

Rathwell described moments when “I knew that I was in deep trouble, but that’s when you get to work and do your best to dig yourself out of whatever looming financial loss is in front of you.”

She looks at the touring industry as a win-lose business. “The only way that you can keep your sanity is to focus on the aggregate of all of your touring properties and calculate them on an annual basis. You are measured by having more wins than losses. About midway through my career, I stopped subscribing to ‘magical thinking’ — which is when you book risky shows with little upside. It takes a lot of time and experience to get to ‘just saying no’ and being okay with that decision.”

When she’s not working, Rathwell spends time with her “best friend and partner” Harry Sandler, who she’s been with for 15 years.

Rathwell also shared pride in her daughter, Marcella Grimaux, who is a screen producer at Silent Partners in Montreal. “She and her wife Catherine have a new baby girl named Carmen Jane,” boasted Grandma Deb.

When she’s done with her adventures as the queen of New York City’s live touring space, Rathwell looks forward to travelling the world. “I want to go everywhere and see everything,” said Rathwell. But she’ll always come “home” to New York. “There is nowhere else in the world that I want to live,” she said of her big city life. “I will always return home to New York.”

STUDENT TURNED... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

settlement was what thrilled me about this business," she recalled.

Duryea offered Montague a job as booking director for North American routing and tours back at Feld Entertainment and Montague ended up working at Feld for the next four and half years.

Going back to Feld was great, said Montague. "I got to work and negotiated in so many different buildings in the country, from small towns to big cities. I got to work with theaters and stadiums."

Feld's portfolio grew during Montague's second stint with the company and on top of the circus and Disney, she was now doing Monster Jam, Supercross and Nuclear Cowboyz. "There was something different every day," she said.

In 2011, David Touhey, president of venues of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, asked Montague if she'd be interested in taking on the job of director of booking at Verizon Center, Washington, D.C. "I knew Dave from my first stretch with the Wizards; we were all in the same offices," she said. "Then I negotiated against him when I was back at Feld."

Montague took the job and was promoted

in 2015 to VP of events and AGM.

"She cares and has integrity," said Touhey. "Michele cares about the people who work for her, the clients she works with, and she wants to be fair. She takes the time to explain things, she's honest, and everyone adores her."

Montague's favorite part of the job is making the calendar come together. "I see my position as making the building as busy as it can be and making the calendar work," she said. "I like putting together the puzzle. With five tenant teams, it's daunting sometimes."

Now back on the other side of the table, dealing with unreasonable expectations from promoters is Montague's least favorite part of the job. "It's my biggest frustration," said Montague. "I often sit there and think to myself, 'do you even hear what you are asking for?' If someone says they want 100 percent of everything, where do you start?"

Over 18 years, Montague has learned to roll with the punches and take things in stride, but even a professional like she is gets thrown once in a while. "My first manager-on-duty experience was for a day event for the Dalai Lama," Montague recollected, still feeling the pain of that day's events. "Everything was going

fine and the next thing I know we were having a near-riot on the concourse because they were giving out holy red-rope bracelets and palm branches. There were people everywhere and it was out of control. I was on the radio with the other staff and they were like, 'it's her first day, she's exaggerating' then they came to the concourse and they were like, 'Holy cow.'"

Montague learned crisis and crowd management quickly. "I think that way now," she said. "Not to be a Negative Nelly, but better to be prepared than to be surprised."

Montague has been an adjunct professor at George Washington University for the past five years, teaching both undergraduate and graduate classes each year. Her classes are very popular with students, but what is even more impressive is the number of students that stay in touch with her over the years.


"I started teaching in 2012 and I love teaching young minds," said Montague. "The way I teach is to have a lot of guest speakers. If I can bring in David Pitman from Cirque Du Soleil and Kelly Flanigan from Live Nation, why would you want to listen to me?"

Montague also takes all of her students on a tour of Verizon Center. "We go in and recap everything we've talked about and the kids get to see things happen live. Walking through a real building, while an event is going on, is a unique experience for the students."

Lisa Delpy Neirotti is the director of sports management masters programs at Georgetown University. She's known Montague for almost seven years. "She's hard; she doesn't take guff from the students, yet they love her."

Touhey is quite impressed with Montague's teaching abilities as well. "She steps up for her students," he said. "She takes the time to listen to her students; she loves the business, and wants to help people along. So many of them continue to seek her out even after they've finished her class and Michele is more than willing to help them in any way she can."

As for her future, Montague "likes where I am and I like the position I'm in." But her surprising goal is to go to a smaller venue, a one-team venue, or even potentially a college venue. "Working at a 200-240 events-a-year facility gets a little old and I don't know if I want to do that the rest of my life," said Montague candidly.

Based on Montague's history of getting what she wants, no one who knows her would be too shocked to see it happen. "Michele is an achiever and strong willed. If she wants something she goes for it," said Touhey. 



CLIENT RELATIONS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

said, adding that Madison Square Garden was among the clients who wanted her back.

Ostroff has worked for Ticketmaster for three decades and sees the biggest difference now, under Live Nation, is that the organizational hierarchy has changed. Her official title is EVP of Arts and Theatre and Strategic Accounts. "Now we have divisions we oversee," she said. "All the people in the New York office do not report to me, but I still know all the clients in the Northeast.

In the beginning, Ostroff worked in a bar in college and a guy who came in all the time to listen to music and would bus her tables loved the fact she could multitask: work the bar, cocktail waitress and study all at the same time. "He said, 'One day I'm going to hire you,'" she recalled. He worked for Ticketron. "I told him how much I loved music. He told me about computerized ticketing, I thought it was so great, because my dad would have to go stand in line for me in downtown Cleveland to buy my tickets. Computerized tickets meant you could stay out in the suburb I lived in or call on the phone and I didn't have to send my dad."

Equal and fair access for everyone was the hook for Ostroff, which is ironic considering

the brokers had that same access and changed the business forever.

Ticketron's Mark (Stony) Stoner was one of her first mentors. He was a contrarian, wearing jeans when others wore suits. "He would say it's all about the client, the client is first and foremost. Always tell them the situation," Ostroff said.

Ticketron eventually moved Ostroff to Washington, D.C., where she started realizing all hell was breaking loose in ticketing and Ticketron and Control Data, who owned it, didn't care about the clients.

This was the low point for Ostroff, who truly loved the industry. With plans to get out, she made one more trip to the International Association of Auditorium Managers (IAAM), where she came to the attention of Rosen, president of Ticketmaster and anathema to Ticketron at the time.

Ostroff observed a panel that included Rosen, venue manager Loris Smith, and Ticketron's Bob Gorra. They were debating whether venues should make revenue from the convenience fee. Ostroff found herself agreeing with Rosen and Smith that they should be partners in ticketing. Rosen noticed.

He caught up with her after the panel and

in his direct way, said, "I have to ask you, why do you work for these numbnuts?"

Her response, which she remembers to this day, was, "I'm not sure why I work for them, but I know why I don't work for someone like you. Because my mother always told me to stay away from New York Jewish lawyers who think they can be in the entertainment industry."

That night, she accompanied two arena guys, Neil Sulkes and Rich Krezwick, to a hospitality suite, not knowing it was Rosen's, and even sat at his table, again unwittingly.

The rest is history. Rosen decided he had to hire her. For five months, he called every day, trying to win her over, and finally she realized that she was afraid of his personality, being such an in-your-face guy, but she believed in his business philosophy, precisely that the client comes first, her lifelong mantra. "I realized I'm only going to learn from somebody who really wants to grow a business," Ostroff recalled. "I liked the industry. Though he scared me, I knew I'd learn to be more aggressive and more direct and understand business better."

Besides Rosen, Ostroff's mentors include

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56 →



**KIM STONE & AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA
WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE**

2017 VENUES TODAY WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

**KIM DAMRON
DONNA JULIAN
MICHELE MONTAGUE
MARLA OSTROFF
DEBRA RATHWELL**



COME
CELEBRATE
the 2017
Venues Today
WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE



JOIN US FOR A COUNTRY PARTY!

Attend our reception in Nashville, Tenn. during the IAVM VenueConnect Annual Conference for our 2017 VT Women of Influence award presentation.

WHO Congratulations to our 2017 VT Women of Influence winners:

KIM DAMRON President, Paciolan, Irvine, Calif.

DONNA JULIAN Senior VP of Arena & Events Ops/GM, Spectrum Center

MICHELE MONTAGUE Assistant GM & VP, Events, Verizon Center

MARLA OSTROFF EVP of Arts & Theatre & Strategic Accounts, Ticketmaster

DEBRA RATHWELL Senior VP, AEG Live, New York

WHAT Venues Today reception with awards, drinks and appetizers.

WHEN Tuesday, August 8, 2017, 5:30-7:00pm

WHERE Music City Center, Room 107

201 5th Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203

(615) 401-1400

WEAR Business casual or country attire (For the southern spirit!)

WHY To congratulate the 2017 VT Women of Influence winners, honor the nominees and past year winners.

Come celebrate with us!



Delaware
North.

MLSE

Music City
CENTER

TicketsWest



Centerplate

CLIENT RELATIONS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

"100 percent my mother, who got me to believe women should really fully understand and like themselves before they go into marriage and get a job. That has guided me my entire life and given me the confidence I didn't have."

Working for Smith makes Ostroff aware she can always learn more, and the sentiment is mutual.

"Marla was mentor for a good portion of my career," Smith said. "I credit her immensely with selflessly helping teach and develop me - both in the early days and in many respects still today. I can't tell you how much I've learned from working for and with her."

Smith sees Ostroff as both teacher and listener, which makes her a great communicator and builds trust. "People pretty universally respect Marla because she's forthright. You know where you stand with her. She plays the long view of building relationships that last for a career and it has served her very, very well."

Directness has defined Ostroff through her 29 years at Ticketmaster, where she started in 1979.

She is direct with her employees and her clients. It's only fair and builds trust. "My relationships, internal and external, are key, and the most important piece of why I am in this business. It was my clients who went to Irving Azoff when I left and said please bring her back."

Ticketing is a service. With Live Nation's Michael Rapino and Ticketmaster's Smith, Ostroff feels she's in a very sweet spot today. "We finally have people [in charge] who understand what it's like to produce, promote and own a venue. It helps us when we say this is what we need for our clients — even theater and sports — they say we get it; that makes total sense."

Even while working for such high-powered entrepreneurs, Ostroff has filled in her life, marrying after she had found herself, as her mother advised. Her husband, Bill, whom she met at Ticketmaster, is in marketing. They have twin sons, Ethan and Miles.

Singling out a highlight of her career proves impossible, but she will share "something that makes me smile is knowing that clients, some of them almost 40 years later with Ticketmaster, can see the value in the partnership and feel that we are there for them. As well as employees I've worked with who either stayed within the company and moved on to other positions and had a great impact or those who left who went on to have wonderful careers. I really enjoy, as I say to Jared, making sure he is surrounded in the future with great people."