

²⁰⁰³ women of the year



Patricia A. Krebs

Position: Partner, King, LeBlanc, & Bland, PLLC

Family: husband, David; son, Charlie Green, 36; daughter, Brandy Beck, 33

Education: B.A., history, East Texas State University; M.A., history, Tulane University; Ph.D., European history, Tulane University; J.D. Tulane University

For Patricia Krebs, who jogs along the St. Charles streetcar track every day at 6 a.m., energy is everything.

That energy sustained her career for the past 20 years as a defense attorney practicing admiralty and maritime casualty law.

"I love litigation," she said. "I like the strategies involved and love being in the courtroom. You have to be able to think fast, adapt and change directions when necessary."

Her energy allowed Krebs, a teenage mother and former high school dropout, to help run a dairy farm while driving 90 miles each way to college. Krebs graduated first in her class at East Texas State University.

Following the suggestion of one of her professors, she came to New Orleans in 1973 to pursue a master's degree in history at Tulane.

"I didn't come from a sophisticated background. I didn't even know what grad school was," said Krebs.

She fell in love with the city, however, and in 1980 with Ph.D. in hand, refused the offer of a tenure-track job in New Jersey to stay at Tulane and attend law school.

"I had developed an interest in law," she said, but there was a practical element too. "I was a divorcée with two kids to support. All I had to do was attend

three more years of school. I was used to intellectual challenges."

Krebs' energy drives her to numerous civic activities. She is active in the Louisiana Association for Defense Counsel, the New Orleans Bar Association, the New Orleans chapter of Women's International Shipping and Trade Association and is the coordinator of Tulane Law School's maritime liaison group.

A Fulbright scholar in Madrid from 1978 to 1979, Krebs today gives back to the cultural exchange program by serving as president of the Louisiana Fulbright Association.

She also sits on the board of directors of the Lighthouse for the Blind, an organization that provides job training for the 20,000 sight-impaired persons in southeastern Louisiana.

But it is a pro bono project that captures her spirit in a special way. Krebs monitors children through the juvenile courts when parents are unable to provide care. "It's easy for kids to get lost in the system," she said.

Reflecting upon teachers who urged her to keep going in school, Krebs added, "people can make such a big difference by little acts of kindness."

— By Jan Fluitt-Dupuy