

Doña Storey

Doña Storey started becoming a businesswoman at the age of five. Her father, a Filipino immigrant, was a successful Hampton Roads entrepreneur, and Storey remembers learning valuable business lessons by sitting in on meetings, listening to him think out loud, participating in dinner-table discussion and being present during negotiations to buy his first business.

"When I look back, I think that one of the neatest things my dad taught me was how to be fearless in business," Storey said. "He showed me that you can make a mistake in business and you can regroup and go on."

Today, Storey is the president of Quality Technical Services, Inc. QTS has two divisions. The first, called the Consulting Group and specializing in strategic management consulting, advises government and corporate entities on marketing, forming alliances and launching new businesses. It also specializes in helping small businesses win government contracts.

Storey's sister, Doreen Fentress, is vice president and technical director of the Facilities Division, which manages multi-phase, multi-location interior design projects for big corporations and the government. For example, when a construction firm builds a shell for a business, QTS sets up all the interior works, including security, telephone systems and furnishings. The kicker is that QTS does this for big firms that are opening multiple buildings at once. At any given time, QTS is working on an average of 200 such projects in 100 cities in 49 states, Storey said.

The company can do all this with just 18 employees because, in Storey's words, "we are the brainpower," or management team, and all labor-intensive work is subcontracted. QTS clients include federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service, the Small Business Administration and the Defense Logistics Agency. Chase Mortgage and Johnson & Johnson are among QTS' commercial customers.

Storey and QTS have recently received numerous awards, including the Small Business Administration's Regional Minority Small Business Person of the Year, Fifty Influential Minorities in Business and Virginia's Fantastic 50 Businesses of the Year.

Storey, an advocate of increasing opportunity for minority- and woman-owned businesses, has been regularly invited to sit on

national and regional panels. She also sits on various boards and is a member of a number of educational and small business associations. She leverages her position of influence to promote legislative action to help small businesses.

With such success under her belt, one could be forgiven for looking at Storey's career and coming to the conclusion that she need not have paid attention to her father's lessons about dealing with mistakes.

Storey, however, disagreed with that assessment. She said there have been plenty of times when she has had to reorient her business. She told one story of having partnered with another company on a large contract only to discover, after becoming deeply involved in the project, that the other company was unethical. Storey made the decision to sever the relationship, and walk away from millions of dollars.

"When I look back I don't think I would have been as comfortable making some of the changes" without having learned those lessons from her father, Storey said. "I just remember how my dad would try to make the wise decision."

-by Jake Denton, *Inside Business Magazine* (12/1/03)