

## **Mary Kay Ash**

**In the 1930's amid the Great Depression, a young Texas housewife and mother began selling books in order to make extra money for the household. Her husband worked, but yet there was not enough money for the family of five to live on. This woman was successful in her sales effort, and she was able to sell more than twenty-five thousand dollars worth of books within her first six months at the job.**

**In 1938, Mary Kathryn, known as "Mary Kay," found herself divorced. She had wanted to study to be a doctor, but an aptitude test showed that she had a natural strength in selling ability. She then changed her career to selling for the Stanley Home Products Company by conducting home parties. She kept this job for twenty-five years, even though it was a most unhappy and unfulfilling occupation. She sold very well, but she claimed that her innovative ideas were not appreciated by her superiors. She felt underpaid and unrecognized when advancement opportunities were available. Often she was overlooked for men in each position.**

**In 1952, she became a national sales director for the World Gift Company, but found that men she had trained were being promoted above her, and at twice her own salary. In 1963, deciding she had had enough and made enough, she retired. But that wasn't the end of the story. It was only beginning for the woman would be named "Businesswoman of the Century" by Lifetime Television Network. Mary Kay's retirement lasted one month!**

**As she began to write a book about her experience as a how-to book for women, she asked herself, "Why not me?" She purchased a formulation for a skin-care cream. She enlisted her husband to handle the business operations and recruited friends to work as beauty consultants for her venture she called, "Beauty by Mary Kay." Tragically, her husband died one month prior to launching the new business. Her family strengthened and encouraged her to forge ahead and on September 13, 1963, Mary Kay Cosmetics was born.**

**In the first year, the business had made almost \$200,000. Within five years the company went public. Later, it went private again and today Mary Kay Inc. remains one of the largest privately held corporations in the USA. When Mary Kay Ash died at 83, on Thanksgiving Day in Dallas, she left 850,000 sales consultants in 37 countries with both the independence that comes from running their own small business and a philosophy of personal achievement that transforms lives.**

**Mary Kay never forgot her goal of helping others and founded the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation, which contributes both to cancer research and to the prevention of abuse and violence against women. "Throughout her life, the extraordinary thing," says her son, co-founder and CEO, Richard Rogers, "was the way Mary Kay caused people to believe in themselves." Mary Kay's own words live today through her corporation and her beneficence, "If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't you're right."**

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