

Business Owner

JEANNIE UNRUH

55, CEO and president of MAC Construction

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I truly believe that's what we are defined by."*



Career and Life Path

Over the span of 30 years, Jeannie Unruh and her husband, Victor, have built a regional construction business that brings in more than \$50 million in sales, and employs 200 people. Top projects include: the West Main Street renovation, the Louisville International Airport parallel runway project, the Louisville Extreme Park, and Waterfront Park Development.

But the payoff for hard work and for transitioning responsibility to their three children has been more spiritual. "I have a lot more time to do what I really love, which is my volunteer work," Jeannie said. "I truly believe that's what we are defined by."

She helps raise money for at-risk children, care for the elderly, and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Twenty-five years ago, at age 30, she was diagnosed with MS.

"It was pretty earth-shattering," said Jeannie, who had three young children at the time. "It took me probably a year and a half to really accept it." She decided that "when the time was right, I would educate others about the illness and help the diagnosed understand what might be ahead of them. Learning takes away some of the uncertainty."

Her world would be a better place if...

People just truly loved life.

Goal she had to let go of...

Certainty. I had to accept the uncertainties of life.

Defining moment...

Accepting a chronic illness at a young age. It has helped me take a different path. I do a lot of things for others who I might not have been aware had a need. Am I glad that I have a chronic illness? In some ways, yeah. Because it's made me a better person.

Spiritual growth, self-cultivation...

I hold to hope. Every day is a new day. I get up every day and look out my window and I say: 'Thank you for this day.'

Maintains her health...

I work out, but not as much as I should. With MS, you have to be careful and not get too overheated. I have a gym at home. I have a trainer that I work with. My primary responsibility is taking my medications to keep my MS in remission. Rest when I need to rest.

Finances, money, and abundance...

We have truly lived the American dream. I came from humble beginnings. My parents were teenage parents. I got married young. But I believe if you work hard, and you do the right thing, and you're lucky, money comes. I started working when I was 14 years old. But money was not the motive for any of my jobs or career.

Love, marriage, children...

Married to Victor for 36 years. Children: Travis, 33; Chad, 30; Maria, 25; four grandchildren.

Creativity...

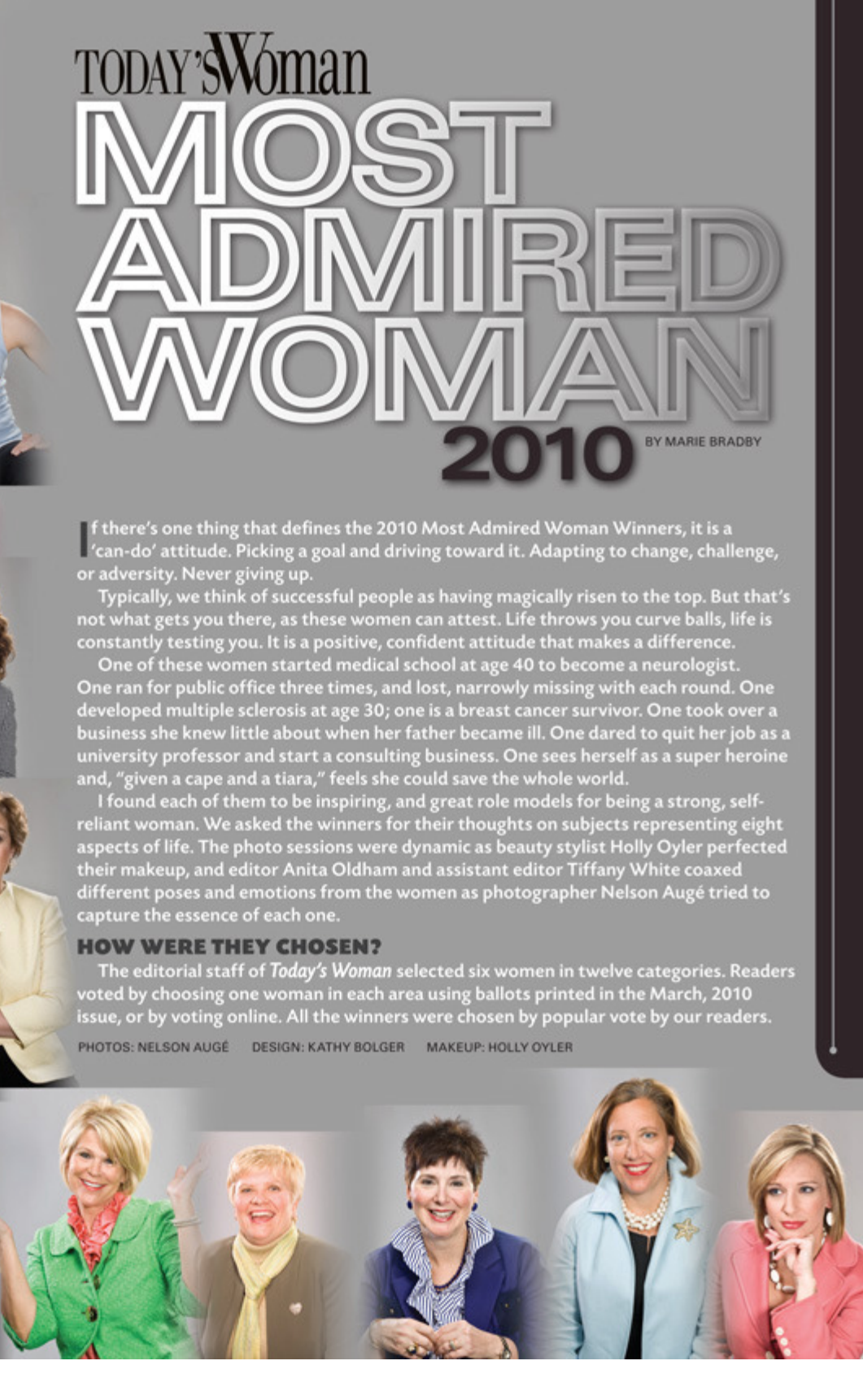
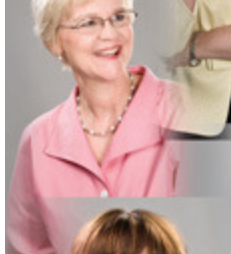
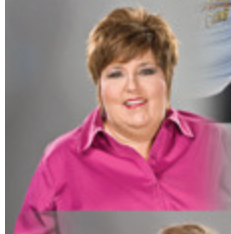
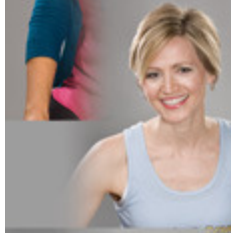
I think my thinking is very creative. I do a lot of planning, thinking, and strategizing.

Helpful people, blessings, travel...

I have a lady who I call my angel that I met the year when I was first diagnosed. She was the first person to talk with me and help me get on the road for my recovery.

The light she brings to the world?

A can-do attitude. I'm pretty tough-skinned and soft-hearted.



TODAY'S Woman

MOST ADMIRABLE WOMAN

2010

BY MARIE BRADBY

If there's one thing that defines the 2010 Most Admired Woman Winners, it is a 'can-do' attitude. Picking a goal and driving toward it. Adapting to change, challenge, or adversity. Never giving up.

Typically, we think of successful people as having magically risen to the top. But that's not what gets you there, as these women can attest. Life throws you curve balls, life is constantly testing you. It is a positive, confident attitude that makes a difference.

One of these women started medical school at age 40 to become a neurologist. One ran for public office three times, and lost, narrowly missing with each round. One developed multiple sclerosis at age 30; one is a breast cancer survivor. One took over a business she knew little about when her father became ill. One dared to quit her job as a university professor and start a consulting business. One sees herself as a super heroine and, "given a cape and a tiara," feels she could save the whole world.

I found each of them to be inspiring, and great role models for being a strong, self-reliant woman. We asked the winners for their thoughts on subjects representing eight aspects of life. The photo sessions were dynamic as beauty stylist Holly Oyler perfected their makeup, and editor Anita Oldham and assistant editor Tiffany White coaxed different poses and emotions from the women as photographer Nelson Augé tried to capture the essence of each one.

HOW WERE THEY CHOSEN?

The editorial staff of *Today's Woman* selected six women in twelve categories. Readers voted by choosing one woman in each area using ballots printed in the March, 2010 issue, or by voting online. All the winners were chosen by popular vote by our readers.

PHOTOS: NELSON AUGÉ DESIGN: KATHY BOLGER MAKEUP: HOLLY OYLER