

Respect Works Here

Community Champion

With a degree in economics and history, **Ruby Sharma** had thought to become a teacher in India, but a thirst for adventure, and the desire to spend time with friends from university, brought him to Prince George in 1976, where the three friends became business partners by opening the first City Furniture. With hard work and dedication, their business grew and Ruby moved with his wife Nenetete, to open the Vernon store in 1984.

Today, the City Furniture chain boasts 22 stores in BC and Alberta, and Ruby and his partners were recently awarded Canadian Home Furnishings Alliance retailer of the year for western Canada – an honor that also recognizes their commitment to service and to giving back to the community.

The well-known businessman has been giving back to the Vernon area for over 33 years, launching and supporting a variety of fundraisers and community builder projects.

Asked about the secret to his success in business and in forging a new life in Canada, Ruby reflects that “Nothing is easy – especially for us, it wasn’t.” He is very philosophical about getting through life. “Do what you need to do. Whatever life presents you, you deal with it. There are no guarantees. If it is going to be, it is up to me.”

Ruby speaks lovingly of his wife Nenetete, whom he met in Prince George. “My wife is one beautiful human being. She is my rock.”

They made a great team: while Ruby grew the business, Nenetete, raised their children Sareena, Sarah and Justin. Once they were grown, she helped with the business, when needed, and the kids have also stepped up to be a part of growing their legacy. The children are all married to wonderful people and Ruby and Nenetete now have three grandchildren.

It was not easy to start the business in the Okanagan and Ruby hadn’t really planned to ever move from Prince George, but when the opportunity presented itself, he decided to go for it.

“Looking back, I wonder sometimes, how did this happen, or why did we do this, but back then there was no time to think about it. It was just run, run, do what you need to do.”

“Chances do come to everybody. Are you prepared for it?” he reflects, laughing. “You need to be tuned in, you need to be focused, you need to know your purpose, and it needs to be morally right ... and then you just go and do it.”

A committed Rotarian for over 33 years, Ruby is connected to the community and to giving back, He encourages others in the business world to join as well. City Furniture became the first corporate member of the Kalamalka Rotary, so as to involve his family members.

“Many of the things I have done, I wasn’t even aware of doing it,” he says.

“Do whatever you can to contribute to the community where you make your livelihood. Give whatever you can.”

~ Ruby Sharma

“You do it to help. Do whatever you can to contribute to the community where you make your livelihood. Give whatever you can, and I guess that adds up over the years.”

Today Ruby enjoys semi-retirement: he still goes into the store when he wants, but also enjoys the Okanagan lifestyle, golfing, traveling and spending time with his family.

The business is in good hands, with family and trusted employees now running the day-to-day business and he is proud of the ongoing success of the business living up to its motto of not selling, but of helping people to buy.

“I feel blessed, happy and content,” says Ruby. He and Nenetete have both overcome health concerns, his children and grandchildren are close by and his friends and business partners are an integral part of his life.

