



## CLASS NOTES

### GAIL DEGIULIO, B.S. '80

## PLAYING TO WIN

In the game of life, it's clear that Gail DeGiulio plays by her own rules — usually with great success. Self-described as “driven,” the dark-haired, energetic

DeGiulio has rolled the product development dice — and won — as a marketing executive for companies such as Toshiba, Microsoft and Classmates.com over the last 25 years.

Now the theater administration grad is funneling her entrepreneurial enthusiasm into a new venture: enhancing family life through old-fashioned board and card games. Her company, SimplyFun, has blossomed since its official launch in December 2004; in a little over a year, the company has expanded its offerings from five games to more than 40 board games and puzzles.

SimplyFun's products are distributed exclusively through in-home parties, sold by its force of nearly 1,000 independent consultants. DeGiulio has two hard-and-fast criteria for selecting games: they must be easy enough to learn in less than five minutes, and must be structured so that they can be played one or more times in 30 minutes.

The idea for SimplyFun began to form while DeGiulio was working as a senior vice president at Wizards of the Coast, a game manufacturer known for introducing the wildly successful Pokemon trading cards to America. “Retailers weren't doing anything innovative (with board games)...people were buying the same games they'd played as children,” she said. “I went to a scrapbooking house party one night and realized that's how people learn games — in the comfort of their own home.”

Beyond the value of bringing several generations of a family together, DeGiulio insists board games provide a wealth of benefits that cannot be had from video or computer games.

“When you play board games, you learn how to share, about risk and reward, better social skills, focus, and how to follow the rules,” she said. “When you play a game with a person, you have to sit across from them and deal with them.”

—Liz Massey