

# Following in



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID McDANIEL

Oklahoma City businesswoman Meg Salyer will be inducted July 2 as vice president/president-elect of the Rotary Club of Oklahoma City. In 2003, she will become the first woman president in the club's 92-year history. Salyer, the president of Accel Financial Services, is shown in front of photos of the club's past presidents at the club's downtown Oklahoma City office.

# her father's footsteps

*Meg Salyer in line  
to be city Rotary's  
first woman president*

**By Brandy McDonnell**  
*Staff Writer*

**R**OTARY Club was a part of Meg Salyer's "family fabric" when she was a child, from her mother's Tuesday night efforts not to duplicate the Rotary lunch menu to her father's participation in service activities.

"For as far back as I can remember, Rotary Club has been a big part of my life," she said.

And when Salyer takes the helm of the Rotary Club of Oklahoma City, it will be a double honor — a chance to follow her father's footsteps and an opportunity to make club history.

The Oklahoma City businesswoman will be inducted as the club's vice president/president-elect at the Rotary Inaugural July 2 at the Civic Center. That will put her in position to become the first female president in the club's 92-year-history in July 2003.

"I think it's a significant honor and a huge challenge," Salyer said. "It really means a lot to me."

Founded in 1905, Rotary is an international organization that allows businesspeople from dif-

## **Meg Salyer**

**Born:** June 22, 1955, in New York.

**Hometown:** Stony Brook, N.Y.

**Resides:** Has lived in Oklahoma City for 18 years.

**Family:** Husband, Christopher, and daughter, Margaret, 13.

**Best advice ever received:** Her dad, Dave Sipperly, taught her to "Choose a way of life and then choose what you do to build on that."

ferent professions to gather on a weekly basis and find avenues of community service. The club has about 1.2 million members in more than 160 countries, and it also works toward bringing about worldwide peace and understanding.

The Rotary Club of Oklahoma City was started in 1909 and became the 29th Rotary club in 1910. Nicknamed "Club 29," it is the largest of the 16 metro area chapters with 441 members, many of them downtown businesspeople, said Shirley Kirschner, the club's executive director.

When Rotary was established, its membership rules reflected those of early 20th century society. In other words, women were not allowed.

But that changed in 1987, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a California state law requiring service clubs to admit

women did not violate the First Amendment. As a result, the board of directors for Rotary International issued a policy statement allowing U.S. Rotary clubs to invite qualified women to be members.

Burns Hargis was president of Club 29 in 1987. He said he thought at the time the change was long overdue, and the rest of the club apparently agreed, voting unanimously to admit women.

"In current times ... it's difficult to remember that Rotary was founded when women couldn't vote and they certainly weren't in the business world," he said.

Now, he thinks a female president for the club is overdue.

"I think it took a long time, but we're finally there," Hargis said. "She'll do great. She's climbed all the stairs you climb to qualify to do that job."

Salyer said she also has an example to look to as she prepares for the presidency. As she was growing up in Stony Brook, N.Y., her father, Dave Sipperly, was a longtime member and president of the local Rotary club. However, Salyer, who moved to Oklahoma City 18 years ago, said she never imagined she would become a Rotary club president.

The president of Accel Financial Staffing in downtown Oklahoma City, Salyer was invited to join Club 29 in 1991, with resi-

# Salyer: Poised to lead Rotary

From Page 1-B

dential real estate broker Dawn Davis as her sponsor. She said she was honored, but she didn't really have her sights set on leadership when she joined.

"But Club 29 offers the opportunity to let you get engaged to whatever capacity you want to be, immediately," she said.

She soon found herself co-chairing the club's fund-raising auction and then serving on the Junior Rotarian committee. She was on several Rotary Inaugural committees and was chairwoman of the Rotary Trade Show, an event that allows club members to showcase their businesses.

She has served on the club's board of directors three times and was club secretary this year.

"She is very deserving of being elected the first woman president in Club 29's 92-year history, because she has chaired every major committee in the club not only with success and efficiency but with great style, sense of fun and always enthusiasm," Kirschner said.

In December, the club began its annual officer elections. Salyer was asked by the nominating committee to be on the ballot for the vice president/president-elect and was elected in the two rounds of voting.

"The timing was just right to cause it to happen this year," she said, adding that any of the club's 71 female members would have been a fine president. "I have to pinch myself, you know, to just realize this has happened."

The 46-year-old said her stint as vice president will give her the chance to attend training conferences, set goals and brainstorm for ideas for next year.

Salyer, who also serves on the board of Downtown Oklahoma City Inc., said she hopes as president to identify a Rotary project to help build on the momentous growth going on downtown. The club currently is working on a three-year project to construct a fountain in front of the new downtown library.

"The lifeblood of any club is its membership, and we look forward to continuing to grow our membership," she said.

She said she wants to focus on recruiting young businessmen and businesswomen, the up-and-coming leaders in the community, into the club.

"Looking forward to running a meeting 52 Tuesdays in a row is a little daunting, but I'm looking forward to it," she said with a grin, adding she is collecting jokes to use at the proceedings.

Salyer said she also is looking forward to seeing the club elect its second woman president.