



CAZENOVIA COLLEGE[®]

FOUNDED IN 1824

From Caz to Family Medicine

*Dr. Rebecca Orendorff '95
sees generations of patients
as physician in the
Duke Health System*



**Major Germany '92
Addresses Graduates**

**Campaign Kicks Off
Alumni Phase**

**Wheler Family's
Impact on Caz**

Designing Her Own Career Path

Alumna is perfect match for Waldner's Business Environments

In her search for colleges, **Illya Castillo-Becktold '95** wanted to carve out a successful career by starting at a place where no one knew who she was. "I wanted to grow and succeed on my own," she said, clearly understanding the importance of self-worth at a young age.

Born in the Bronx, New York, and a graduate of Forest Hills High School in Queens, Castillo-Becktold wanted

to venture outside of New York City. It didn't take her long to discover that Cazenovia College was the ideal place and would best allow her to begin building a future in the interior design field.

Castillo-Becktold attended Cazenovia College at a time when its Interior Design Program was transitioning from offering two-year degrees to four-year bachelor of fine arts degrees. She became so comfortable at Caz and recalls in her second year how stressful it was to have to think about leaving campus for another college. "No one wanted to go after just two short years," she said. "We were so excited when Caz announced that it would be expanding the program by offering four-year degrees." As it turned out, most of Castillo-Becktold's classmates in the Interior Design Program chose to stay at Cazenovia and earn both their associate's degrees in 1993 and bachelor's degrees in 1995.

After departing Cazenovia College, Castillo-Becktold applied to many interior design firms in the New York City area. She quickly landed an interior design sales position with Beck Office Furniture in Long Island and spent about a year "learning the ropes" and meeting with clients. Castillo-Becktold recalls discussing with her colleagues how Cazenovia College trained its interior design students to excel in AutoCAD – a computer aided (2-D and 3-D) design program that is commonly used for design and drafting.

"One year into the job at Beck, I was being courted by Waldner's Business Environments, Inc. – a full service office furniture

dealership in Manhattan," said Castillo-Becktold, who was the perfect match for what Waldner's needed in a designer.

"My portfolio aligned with Walder's business needs and they were highly impressed with my AutoCAD experience and abilities," added Castillo-Becktold, who was promoted to director of design in 2000, and corporate managing director of design in 2005. Today, she serves as director of account services, where she oversees the sales, operations and design needs for specific Waldner's clients on projects from New York to California and even Hawaii.

She continues to praise Cazenovia College for her professional development, especially Professors **Josef Ritter**, **Betsy Moore**, and Professor Emerita **Scotty Ottaviano**. "The faculty at Caz are hands-on; they are practicing professionals in their fields and exposed me to everything I needed to succeed in the workplace."

Castillo-Becktold remains connected to her alma mater. In 2009, she was back on campus for Reunion and received the Young Alumni Award, in recognition of her success and accomplishment in a career. Living in Forest Hills, New York, with her husband, Jeff, of 14 years, and two daughters: Emma, 2, and Lola, 7, Castillo-Becktold recently attended an alumni event in New York City. While reminiscing with fellow alumni and catching up on the latest College news, she found herself promoting Cazenovia College to a prospective student and her dad who were in attendance.

"Promoting the College and the Interior Design Program is my way of giving back," shared Castillo-Becktold, who added that her Caz experience allowed her to grow as a person and served as the blueprint to her career success.

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- Illya Castillo-Becktold '95



Photo: Wayne Westervelt