

Kleinfeld Bridal

A Triumphant Turnaround

by Myra Chanin
photos by JillPhotography.com

Wayne Rogers, Ronnie Rothstein and Mara Urshel are longtime friends and business partners—three attractive, intelligent, focused, sophisticated individuals who in 1999 acquired the landmark but failing Bay Ridge Kleinfeld Bridal emporium at an unbelievably reasonable price!

So what's new with Kleinfeld Bridal ten years later? Only quintupled gross sales; relocation to a lavish, state-of-the-art, by-appointment-only Manhattan flagship location with a just-opened-this-month made-to-measure facility for grooms; tremendous national visibility via their hit *The Learning Channel* series called *Say Yes to the Dress*; and pioneering, innovative Kleinfeld Bridal boutiques in Minneapolis and Nashville with more to come. Rogers, Rothstein and Urshel are the triumphant triumvirate responsible for a flourishing and expanding national brand. Moreover, each partner's unique life experiences contribute powerfully to their combined success.

For three years, Co-CEO and Chairman of the Board Wayne Rogers played Trapper John on TV's prizewinning show *M*A*S*H*, which is still in syndication. A southern boy, Wayne attended Princeton where he performed with the Triangle Club Players, graduated with a degree in History and then joined the U.S. Navy as a navigator. When his ship was in dry-dock in Brooklyn, Wayne watched a friend direct a rehearsal and was hooked on acting again. He left the service and moved to New York, ostensibly to investigate the intricacies of finance, but in-

stead studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse, supporting himself as a busboy and lifeguard. Even his lean years proved profitable thanks to his skill at selecting and leveraging his investments.

In New York, Wayne roomed with Peter Falk who'd lost a great deal of money through his business manager's malfeasance. Dazzled by Wayne's uncanny investment ability he hired Wayne to manage his finances. So did Falk's friends, James Caan and Jack Webb.

Wayne juggled Off-Broadway assignments until he also acquired a regular paycheck from *Edge of Night*. In LA he landed his first prime time co-starring role as Luke Perry in *Stagecoach West*. Then came *M*A*S*H*.

After three years Wayne left *M*A*S*H* because of a contract conflicts, continued to perform in but major stardom eluded him. During one acting hiatus, Wayne produced a horror quickie, *The Astro Zombies*, which earned him a 2000% profit on a \$47,000 investment.

Wayne is remarkable for turning a deep interest in personal finance into a second calling as a money manager and investor, and then leveraging his acting contacts to anchor his second career. He's produced numerous Broadway hits, owned a vineyard, been a shareholder in a major league baseball team, developed real estate and he still manages business affairs for top artists and businessmen.

And he's on TV again but as a pundit on

Fox Business Networks' investment show, *Cashin' In*.

Kleinfeld Co-CEO Ronnie Rothstein graduated from the Wharton School and got his law degree from the University of Miami. His family owned one of the top Miami Beach hotels where Ronnie held various management positions. After relocating to the West Coast, Ronnie and his good friend Arnold Perry formed Perry Rothstein Partners, a boutique investment banking firm that provided capital, business strategies and consulting services. Ronnie and Wayne met 35 years ago when Arnold invited them both to lunch. Wayne and Ronnie liked each other instantly, and after Ronnie moved back to Manhattan, Ronnie represented West Coast Wayne in New York transactions.

Kleinfeld President Mara Urshel has been Ronnie Rothstein's partner in business and life for the last 24 years. She's also one of the best known and respected executives in the retail apparel industry with 30 years of developing and marketing luxury merchandise. During her 20-year tenure at Saks Fifth Avenue as senior vice president and general merchandise manager she introduced many designers, including Isaac Mizrahi, Donna Karan, Perry Ellis, and Michael Kors. Mara was hired to evaluate the problems at the Bay Ridge bridal shop. After three months she was convinced that a potentially first rate business was being destroyed. One night she came home and said to Ronnie. "We really should buy Kleinfeld's. Call Wayne." Wayne knew nothing about Kleinfeld's, but he soon learned that Kleinfeld's was

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