

BUSINESS

Equality comes home for top female execs

■ According to a new survey, women who run Florida companies have redefined the dynamics of marriage. Most have supportive spouses with flexible schedules.

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Gloria Rodriguez of Miami's Kramer Laboratories has something in common with most of the women leading large businesses in the state: big aspirations and a supportive husband.

While women now preside over dozens of Florida companies, they also enjoy marriages with more economic and domestic equality than in

past decades, a survey released today says.

The survey by Florida International University and The Commonwealth Institute South Florida gives a glimpse for the first time into the personal and business lives of successful women executives in the state. The survey shows 62 percent of CEOs and presidents at top women-led businesses in Florida are married, with an average of two children. And, although their husbands have full-time

•TURN TO WOMEN, 20A

■ MOST FLORIDA WOMEN CEOS ARE HAPPY WITH BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME, 1C

Women enjoy equality at home

•WOMEN, FROM 1A

jobs, most of the men have flexible work schedules.

These dynamics represent a shifting power balance in marriage, with housework and child-care duties open to negotiation.

"What this shows is there has to be some give," said Joyce Elam, executive dean of FIU's business school. "For women to hold these very demanding jobs, they have to have some flexibility someplace in their lives."

BUILDING A BUSINESS

Rodriguez, 48, took over Kramer Laboratories from her father about 20 years ago. She has built the business to \$15 million in revenue and is about to expand it further by launching consumer products aimed at Hispanics in Walgreens and CVS stores. Rodriguez's husband, owner of a freight forwarding company, makes his own work schedule and offers his wife "mutual support."

"He never puts restrictions or demands on me," Rodriguez said. "He understands that sometimes I have to work more or travel more, and he pitches in."

Carol Evans, CEO of Work-



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

HELP AT HOME: Gloria Rodriguez runs Kramer Laboratories. She says she and her husband have 'mutual support.'

ing Mother magazine, said the Florida survey is indicative of a national trend in which she participates. Because she's a high earner, her husband has the opportunity to venture outside the traditional 40-hours-a-week model. He works from home.

"To achieve a high level of success on the job, you need a husband who nurtures your career, a cheerleader," Evans said. "You can't fight all the battles at once. If you are fighting a battle at home over who should be the main breadwinner, you're not going

to make it to CEO."

In Florida, the women who lead million-dollar businesses aspired early on to own or run their own companies. Peggy Schultz knows the reality of these aspirations.

"In order for a woman to be successful in a male-dominated business, she must work harder than a man, pay attention to details and have a whole lot of tenacity," Schultz said.

Schultz worked six days a week over the past 25 years to build O-Gee Paint into a \$5.5 million paint business

with four locations in Miami-Dade County, all while raising three children. Schultz said she received little support from her first husband. That marriage ended in divorce.

"But while my husband wasn't supportive, my kids were," she said. "My daughter made dinner, and my son did the laundry." Remarried for 20 years, Schultz said she is now married to a retired painting contractor, a "house husband" with dishpan hands.

MARRIED, WITH KIDS

Stephanie Coontz, author of *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, said the FIU survey proves what her research also found: Career women are just as likely to marry and have children as mid- to low-earners, even if some achieve that later in life. And, she said, divorce rates are going down for women with high education and earnings. At the same time, Coontz said, the shifting power of balance in marriage has benefited men.

"The men are not doing it because a powerful woman is holding something over their heads," Coontz said. "There are real rewards to spending time with your kids, and more and more men are discovering that."