

Twyla Garrett '93: thinking big

A couple of months ago, Twyla Garrett was quoted in the *Plain Dealer* saying that her goal, growing up in a challenging city neighborhood, "was not to be poor."

Garrett has indeed come a long way and her goals have considerably grown. The newspaper story focused on the fact that Garrett, listed on her business cards as *sole proprietor*, had just launched an ambitious entrepreneurial venture on the west bank of the Cuyahoga River in the storied Flats.

The centerpiece of Garrett's complex is the 2020 Martini Cafe Lounge. The handsome space offers a full menu, live music, dancing, the Mocha Fusion Coffee Lounge and the Market on the Square. Garrett said, "I am happy to offer customers a well-rounded experience when they come to 2020. They can sip on lattes in the lounge or grab a loaf of bread from the market or dance the night away to hot jazz or funk."

Garrett's bold entrepreneurial move reportedly represents a \$1.5 million investment in the Stonebridge Square development that is attempting to pump new life into an entertainment area. Her first connection with Stonebridge occurred three years ago when she signed a deal to buy two luxury penthouses at the residential anchor of the development. Looking around her prospective new home, a light bulb went off in Garrett's Ursuline-shaped vision and she saw the promise of the space next door to the residential building.

Three years later, when the complex opened in February, Garrett said, "I'm tired. But I'm elated. After three years I feel like I'm giving birth to a past-due child. I think we are going to be the destination point for Cleveland. We're looking for mature, adult audiences who can appreciate the atmosphere and ambience we've created."

A good deal of 2020's ambience comes courtesy of a crew of Italian cinema set designers who were flown in to work long and hard to transform a major portion of a former factory building into an indoor version of an Italian piazza. There is everything from Tuscan walls, cobblestone Roman streets, to nine-foot replicas of Venetian party masks and giant coffee cups that call to mind Alice in Wonderland on a trip to Italy.

"It's a fantastic common space that is intended to be the social gathering place of the entire complex," said Garrett. "With the leadership of the K & D Group developers, the former factory will also house offices, a fitness center and other elements of a \$6 million total plan."

Garrett is in the works to have the Cleveland 2020 complex serve as the model for another entrepreneurial venture in



Vice President for Institutional Advancement Kevin Gladstone with alum entrepreneur Twyla Garrett '93

Washington, DC. Both efforts are seen as places which will offer support to area artists and "people who need a second chance."

While attending Ursuline Garrett was a detail-oriented, mathematically-gifted accounting student. After graduation, she signed on with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in downtown Cleveland, served a stint with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Defense Department in D.C. and then logged nine years as a foreign military sales program manager for that federal department. In that capacity, she found herself selling used planes and ships to nations that couldn't afford new ones.

"If you spend long years selling ships, the challenge of selling martinis is not so daunting," said Garrett. The high-energy whirlwind also spent much time building Management Enterprises, Inc., which specializes in security, disaster preparedness and business process engineering and employs over 50 people, in Richmond, San Diego and Washington.

Just call her the most recent embodiment of Ursuline's commitment to values, voice and vision, a one-woman force determined to use her energy and imagination to help bring new vigor and life to her hometown.

"Everything came together for me at Ursuline College, that is where I got my business insight and my discipline," said Garrett. "My mom gave me the confidence to do anything I wanted to do, and she taught me to work hard, but the dedication and the mentoring I received at Ursuline made a significant difference in my life."