

Chuck Williams - Founder of Williams-Sonoma

*by Carin Posedel '04 and
Kate Zdrojewski '05*

RMI students had the honor of meeting with Chuck Williams, the founder of the extraordinary Williams-Sonoma company, and with other distinguished members of the RMI Advisory Board on May 5.

Williams is one of the local entrepreneurs responsible for revolutionizing the cooking and retail industries. We were privileged enough to sit down with Williams to learn about his company and receive advice about what it takes to succeed in the retail industry today.

Williams began by explaining how Williams-Sonoma got its start, nearly 50 years ago, in 1956. "During my trip to France in 1953, I realized that the French had so many culinary luxuries in their own kitchens that were only available in the U.S. to professional restaurants and bars. I wanted to bring those items to the U.S. and sell them to Americans who were as interested in cooking as I am," explained Williams. Williams had originally worked as a building

contractor, and after making what would be a life-changing trip to France, he realized he could use his love for working with his hands in another field. Recognizing the potential market for professional cookware in the U.S., he found himself starting up a retail store in San Francisco, an industry he had never planned to enter but soon grew to love.

Williams shared stories with us about delivering the proper cookware to a desperate cook's home on Christmas Eve so that she could complete her special holiday dinner, and advising customers over the phone at 5 p.m. as to how to finish a recipe that was not going as planned.

"I like to do things like that, and so do Williams-Sonoma's employees. If you have the right people, you will find they do those things on their own, and they like to do them. The difference with Williams-Sonoma is the feeling we give our customers; that is what it is all about," said Williams.

Williams-Sonoma prides itself on delivering high-quality products and customer-centric service, and Williams hopes that this 48-year tradition will continue for many years to come.

Not only did Williams share the goals and values of his company, he also offered some personal advice that we can all take to heart. "Do something you want to do. Learn as much as you can about it, do it yourself, and have the love of doing it." It is obvious



**(L-R) Kate Zdrojewski ('05),
Chuck Williams (founder and
director emeritus - Williams-
Sonoma), and Carin Posedel ('04).**

When asked about his favorite part about retail, Williams did not hesitate. "Giving excellent service and making friends with the customers," he said. Williams-Sonoma was founded on the principles of establishing relationships with customers and loving the culinary arts.

**His favorite
part about
retail: "Giving
excellent ser-
vice and mak-
ing friends with
the customers."**
- Chuck Williams

Inter Office
Routing Box
Initial and pass on

Chuck Williams *continued from page 1*

to others at Williams-Sonoma that Williams adheres to his own advice. "Chuck is the first person here in the morning and the last to leave at night," said Howard Lester, the chairman of the board at Williams-Sonoma.

"I have given up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I have never regretted it and I have

loved every minute of it," Williams told us with a smile.

It is our hope that we can find the same satisfaction in our own careers. In a time that demands instant gratification, it is common to want to start big and expect big results. However, Williams lends the advice that "It is better to start small and watch it grow.

Stability is more important in the long run than a sudden and short-lived result. Thinking rationally and learning as much as possible about an intended venture will never result in failure; it will always result in knowledge gained. There is definitely something to be said for that." ■

RMI students see first hand what success looks like

by Dan Corrigan '05

On May 5, the annual Retail Management Institute Advisory Board and Retail Studies Student Association student reception was held at the Williams-Sonoma headquarters located in downtown San Francisco.

In the company's conference room, perched above the beautiful San Francisco Bay, distinguished RMI Advisory Board members, RMI alumni, and fellow students mingled and chatted about the exciting world of retail.

Williams-Sonoma Chairman Howard Lester spoke to the group about his company's present, past, and future. He

discussed the ever-changing landscape of the retail industry and how his company has adapted to the changing times.

Williams-Sonoma has found numerous other niches in the retail industry, with the creation of Pottery Barn, Chambers, Hold Everything, and some soon-to-be launched new concepts. These new ventures have added to the unbelievable success that the Williams-Sonoma Company has experienced.

The evening afforded everyone a perfect opportunity to get to know each other better and to visit in a spectacular atmosphere. ■



Howard Lester, chairman, and Chuck Williams, founder and director emeritus, at the RMI Spring Advisory Board reception at Williams-Sonoma in San Francisco.

Mervyn's Grant Presentation

by Rosemary Miller '04

Mervyn's representatives presented the Retail Management Institute and Santa Clara University's Career Center with \$5,000 each on Jan. 28.

Mervyn's representatives included Lisa Rebarcheck Wodtke, Jodi Green, Leticia Jimenez-Ler, Michael Avila, and SCU alumna Holly Miller. RMI Director Dale Achabal and Associate Director Cynthia Gamage received the grant award on behalf of RMI.



Mervyn's executive team and RMI seniors at Mervyn's grant presentation. (L-R) Jodi Green, Leticia Jimenez-Ler, Michael Avila, Lisa Rebarcheck Wodtke, Smriti Khanna ('04), Dzung Duong ('04), Rosemary Miller ('04), and Holly Miller ('03).

The funds will be put toward an RMI scholarship that will be awarded to qualified students at the end of this school year.

Career Center Associate Director Susan Rockwell accepted the grant awarded to the SCU Career Center. The grants demonstrate the growing relationship between Mervyn's and Santa Clara University.

By the end of June, four RMI students accepted offers to join the Mervyn's team after graduation. Jennifer Chiang, Smriti Khanna, Dzung Duong, and Rosemary Miller will be working in Mervyn's merchandising, finance, and marketing departments respectively. ■

New Beginnings - New Careers Class of 2004

A + F Technologies

Vicenza, Italy
Francesco Gambini

DFS Galleria

Merchant Training Program
Mario Diaz
Trisha Tomokiyo

eBay

Merchandising Specialist
Andrew Machado

Capeknocks, LLC

Marketing Assistant
Stella Palileo

Gap, Inc

RMP Program
Carin Posedel

Google

Kacey Denton

Gymboree

Planning and Allocations
Laura Del Santo

Jordan & Andrews

Private Accounting Firm
Kelly Alexander

Macy's West

Executive Training Program
Melissa Kline

Mervyn's

Marketing, Merchandising and
Finance Executive Training Programs
Jennifer Chiang
Dzung Duong
Smriti Khanna
Rosemary Miller

Nordstrom

Management Training Program
Shannon Smith
Brianna Donegan

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Assurance & Bus. Advisory Service
& Systems Process Analysis Associates
Jennifer Rappa
Patricia Tran

Restoration Hardware

Planning Coordinator
Stephanie Oroz

Walgreens

Briana Martini

Wells Fargo

RMD Training Program
Alicia Wheeler

RCME Presents - The Untrapped Mind: Edith Weiner's Thinking Techniques



Edith Weiner, president of Weiner, Edrich, Brown, Inc., brought "Thinking Techniques" to local retailers on March 11, at the RCME program.

by Debra Black

"Before you have a confrontation with someone, first walk a mile in their shoes. Then, when you have the confrontation, you will be a mile away. And you'll have their shoes." So began Edith Weiner's far-reaching discussion on March 11 of some of the thinking techniques that she uses to keep in the forefront of social, economic, political and technological trend analysis.

The Mother of All Thinking Techniques: Educated Incapacity

Educated incapacity is knowing so much about your area of expertise that you're the last to be able to see its future differently. "There isn't anybody who doesn't suffer from this," says Weiner, president of a leading futurist consulting group. "It's why we would not just go to doctors to find out about the future of health care...army generals about the future of national security...or retailers about the future of retailing."

"With more baggage, we get paid more and get a higher title. But we also get more educated incapacity, and there's no way to avoid that. The trick becomes how to see the world through the eyes of an alien, or the eyes of a child," says Weiner, co-author of *Insider's Guide to the Future*.

Psychology's notion of figure/ground illustrates the biases we all have in viewing the world and making decisions. Under hypnosis, two

people will give two completely different accounts of a crime or an accident. What they see is predicated upon their cultural biases, education, experience, and expectations. "This happens in business every single day," says Weiner.

World's most important demographic trend

The single most important demographic trend is the aging of the industrial world. "We have an under-25 developing world and an increasingly over 60 industrialized world," she says. Only three industrialized countries have youth replacement populations: the U.S., New Zealand and Iceland.

"When you see the figure and the ground differently, everything changes. Everything," says Weiner. She cites these facts:

- One in nine Baby Boomers is projected to live to be 100 years old.
- The average life expectancy of the adult worker in the U.S. today is 84.
- Fifty-three percent of all U.S. households have a female major breadwinner
- We're extending life in the middle, living the years from 35 to 70 as essentially the same age. We expect that whatever shortcomings there are as we age, we can buy.

Marketers tend to lump people into categories. Yet as we get older, we actually become more multi-faceted, like diamonds. We become more differentiated. "There is no putting us in a particular cubbyhole," says Weiner. "We are moving targets all of the time."

"When it comes to the goods and services that are provided to the public, we will have to continue to listen and learn from a multicultural perspective to help shape our institutions," she says. "Many young people around the world have a love/hate relationship with the United States. On one hand, they see themselves easily blending into our culture because it is an amalgam of theirs and everybody else's. On the other hand, there is resentment about the fact that there is no purity, there is nothing that holds their own culture sacred."

Thinking technique: Trend and Counter-Trend

For every trend there is at least one counter trend. "That gives you at least double the opportunity to make money," by repackaging or using different distribution channels and markets, says Weiner, giving candles, angels, and journaling books as examples.

Some trends/counter trends that we're heading into:

Big Brother privacy invasions/ Little Brother privacy invasions.

While there are laws to protect us from the government, we have nothing to protect us against the guy next door. Identity theft is one little piece of that. The CIA has concluded that corporate espionage will be a major issue for national security in the 21st century. Blackmail is going to be one of the fastest-growing white-collar crimes.

Work at home/Home at work

The trend toward work at home is increasing. The counter trend is more and more people are living

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RCME Presents - Edith Weiner

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where they work, with enormous implications for retailers.

Workplaces today have microwave ovens, steamer irons, and beds for taking naps.

The information glut/ The consumer's attention

"If information were power, librarians would rule the world," says Weiner. There is only one source of power: implementation. What the consumer chooses to pay attention to is worth money to the marketer; attention becomes the monetary unit. One of the most significant strategic competitive edges in the 21st century will be actually paying attention to customers.

Thinking technique: Cycles are spirals

Everything comes in cycles: history, climate, the market, and political movements. "The problem is that we tend to envision cycles in terms of a pendulum. Instead, you have to envision cycles as spirals. Things do come back around, but they never come back on the same plane. The winners will be the ones who can figure out what's different this time."

Thinking technique: The touchdown strategy

Weiner likened retailing strategy to a football game, with the toughest being the touchdown strategy: relationship. "What is the one thing that all relationships have in common? They cost you something to leave. A true relationship has a barrier to exit," says Weiner. "Barriers to exit are the real relationship propositions in business." She gave whole life insurance and Gillette razors as examples. In order to use the Gillette, you have to use the

blades. The consumer and the delivering company both benefit from the fact that the customer doesn't leave. "That is the touchdown, because it costs so much less to keep a customer than get a new one."

Thinking technique: The right of way

Weiner compares the Internet to the development of the railroad. Both were originated by the government and developed with private investment. What did the railroad truly give up? The right of way—to the telegraph service, telephone service, the mail service. This time around, the Internet companies that didn't understand right of way were the ones that collapsed. The ones that are still good revenue models are the ones who understand and develop the right of way. E-Bay, Amazon, and Yahoo can carry anything for a toll. "I really do believe the right of way is the most under-utilized business asset in the economy," says Weiner.

The 21st Century

"In the 21st century, we're not going to be paying for smarts much anymore, because smart is what's going onto software. What we will pay for in the 21st century is intelligence, and to a certain degree, sensitivity and intuition: the ability to solve a problem when you've never seen it before, when it was never in a textbook, when nobody ever taught it to you. The ability to take each thing as it comes, see it for what it is, and solve it correctly.

"This is really my mantra when it comes to retailing: There is no such thing as overcapacity. There is only under imagination." ■

Other Trends

The climate has fundamentally changed: Water is going to be a major issue in the 21st century.

The Nerd Market: Nerds are now the gatekeepers in terms of many purchasing decisions. They are the recommenders of a lot of goods and services in the economy, and they become important beyond their numbers. Nobody has really taken the time to truly research them and understand what they could mean to businesses.

Multi-money: "The chance that I paid the same thing for my airline ticket as the person next to me is pretty much zero," says Weiner. The second most circulated currency, next to the dollar? Frequent flyer miles.

The Leasing Economy: Everything is being leased, though home ownership is still seen as the cornerstone of success around the world. In fact, the American dream is increasingly being defined as owning the second home.

Biotech and Brain Mapping: Distinct physiological differences exist between the male and female brain; fragrances and colors have certain affects on people.

Yellow: wakes us up, releases serotonin, increases creativity and innovation

Blue: releases melatonin, quiets us down, lowers blood pressure

Red: signifies danger or power, raises blood pressure, red cars are ticketed more often and cost more in resell

Green: the color of camouflage, safety

Nanotechnology and rapid prototyping: Without question, these have the capability of completely transforming the entire retail landscape. People will be able to do a lot of things on a distributed basis, such as creating their own belts and scarves at home.

"By far, the most important factor in productivity and creativity is natural light."

— Edith Weiner

Retail Speakers on Campus

below left Ellen Shulman, manager, Strategic Mindshare visits Professor Gail Kirby's marketing class.

below right Kevin Sears, director of employee and labor relations, and Danniell Cano (SCU Alum '99), assistant manager of employee and labor relations at Macy's West speak in Professor Jim Hall's Industrial Relations class.



above Derek Seidewand (RMI Alum '94) merchandise manager of toys at Wal*Mart.com, presented in Professor Gerald Klemushin's e.commerce class.

Retail Management Institute and Tias Business School Retail Program

In March, the Tias Business School at Tilburg University (The Netherlands) and Santa Clara University's Retail Management Institute came together for a week-long Executive Retailing Program based on Retail Revenue Management.

The Executive Retailing Program provided an overview of the most recent thinking and business practices in retailing. The program featured the views of both

European and American retailing management academics. Enhancing understanding of the strategic retail value chain was a major focus. Fellow retailing practitioners exchanged experiences and ideas, and were exposed to a broad range of concepts, each directly applicable to the retail industry.

The session focused on: developing the value scorecard, category management and assortment planning, designing flexible and responsive supply chains, and emerging multi-channel strategies. ■



Tias/U.S. program attendees - March 2004

Calendar of Events

May 26

RCME Executive Education Program Series:

Big Change at Best Buy – Working Through Hypergrowth to Sustained Excellence with co-authors **Andy Billing** and **Elizabeth Gibson**.

June 11

RMI 2004 Graduation Ceremony and Scholarship Awards

September 20

Fall Quarter Begins

October 6

RCME Executive Education Program Series: *Building Brands and Businesses* - **Judy Hopelain**, managing partner of Prophet, a San Francisco-based strategic consulting firm committed to helping companies develop, manage, grow and protect their brands.

October 19

RMI Advisory Board Meeting
Location: Santa Clara University

Retail Studies Internship Faire

by Erica Paul '04

The Retail Studies program, along with numerous local retailers, offers the Retail Management Institute's students with quite a unique experience: the annual Retail Studies Internship Faire. This event focuses on finding the perfect candidate for each company's upcoming summer internship program.



Retail Studies Internship Faire

The faire features about 20 different local retailers, including Macy's West, Nordstrom, Gymboree, GAP Inc., REI and several other prestigious companies. Representatives

from each company eagerly offer their time to talk about the retail field with the students of the Retail Studies minor, and provide students with the information they need to get involved in a particular internship program.

The Retail Studies Minor program is the only one at Santa Clara that

requires a lengthy application process for admittance. This includes a written and oral presentation of the applicant's interest and future career goals, as well as interviews with the director and associate director, Dale Achabal and Cynthia Gamage. Due to this process, retailers recruiting at Santa Clara can be sure to find students with an exclusive interest in and dedication to the retail industry. The internship faire offers employers and students a relaxed environment to make their first introductions.

The faire is the first chance for students and retailers to meet and greet one another prior to the grueling interview process that comes only weeks after the faire. During the faire, the employers offer information about the opportunities and skills their company is looking for in a potential new hire, and pass out informational pamphlets and business cards. In exchange, each student comes eager with questions and smiles to learn more. Students have the opportunity to



Vanessa Difuntorum ('05) and Erica Paul ('05) get a chance to talk with Bear Creek's Harry & David division.

arrange store visits and to obtain the resources to research each company individually, ensuring that he or she is well prepared to face any questions given during the interview. This helps to curb those interview jitters, and to see which company is the right fit for each student.

The Retail Studies Internship Faire is simply one more benefit the Retail Studies program offers in a continued attempt to find the best fit for both their affiliating companies and most of all, for their students. ■

RMI Summer 2004 Internships - Congratulations!

DFS Galleria

Laura Brennan
Natalie Dagan

Gap, Inc.

Megan Barnett – Old Navy
Andrew Dapprich – Gap
Melissa Eckel – Banana Republic
Angela Gilmore – Gap
Erica Paul – Old Navy

Gymboree

Audrey Abar
Christine Tran

Kraft

Vanessa Difuntorum

Macy's West

Leila Motamedi

Mervyn's Stores

Catherine Cochrane
Vanessa Ravizza

Nordstrom

Carlie Brown
Dan Corrigan
Rachael Fairbairn
Natalia Nicholson

REI

Alexis Held
Kate Zdrojewski

Ross

Diana Solatan

The Sharper Image

Lori LoBue

Walgreens

Vincent Leonardi

West Marine

Emily Screbant

Thank you to all our internship sponsors!

RMI Alumni Profile - Jay Robinson - Class of 1983

by Andrew Machado '04

What made you choose this profession?

I started out to be a CPA, but found it lacked creativity (unless of course prison was an acceptable option).

Was there a certain aspect of this field that particularly sparked your interest, or was there a mentor or family member who led you into the retail industry, or was it something entirely different?

A marketing major/RMI emphasis became clear because it combined analytical skills with leadership and creativity.

Initially, I was influenced by Mary-Ann Odegaard Kriewall and later Dale Achabal once I joined RMI. This led to retailing as a choice.

How did you get started in retail, and where has it taken you along your career path?

I started with Mervyn's in 1983 and moved quickly through two assistant buying positions in Hayward and South Central to become a buyer in December 1985. The South Central division was closed on March 31, 1986 as Dayton Hudson Corporation (now Target Corp.), revised its plans for Mervyn's growth. I joined Charleston Hosiery in May 1986 as a VP of Sales for Women's and Children's.

How would you define your role in this company?

Today, I am an equity partner in the company and direct all sales, marketing and product development areas, both domestic and foreign.

Much of my time in today's manufacturing environment is spent building and developing strategic alliances that will maximize our profitability through branded and private label mix of product. The second part is then working on our capabilities as they relate to our

mix of domestic and offshore production capacities.

What is your educational background and how has it played into your position in this company?

Santa Clara, with its smaller class size (at least in my day), and RMI with its focus on retailing, combined to create early opportunities to actively network and problem solve. Many of the other retail management trainees at that time came in several steps behind the curve set by RMI.

What does a normal day entail for you? What would you say are the highlights of your day?

I generally travel three days a week three weeks a month, with periodic longer trips to the Orient. Work highlights center around: 1) new product/business generation with Nike and SmartWool. Recently, I worked on new technologies tailored for Tiger Woods and it has proven to be a hit with PGA players in general, and 2) new business alliances for our branded lines. We have been very successful in getting the #1 or #2 name in any niche we go after. This is a key to successful growth. The biggest highlight in my day however, is coming home to two young but extremely powerful forces of nature named Blake and Zach. They are what it is all about.

What made you choose to work for this company versus the many other retailers out there?

For both Mervyn's back in the 80's and subsequently Charleston Hosiery, it was their reputations as being strong, growing companies where talent would move you quickly.

Which qualities or characteristics, do you think, are important in order to hold your position?

I used to say that the buying side versus the manufacturing side of retailing is the difference between order making and order taking. So much has changed that I have found that the creativity and vision needed today is much higher on this end.

We not only have to recognize business opportunities and potential, but we have to sell the ideas as well as sell our company as the right partner to make it happen. Buyers on the whole are a lot less knowledgeable technically than they were 10 years ago. If I had to guess, the average age is down 8-10 years. This means we have to bring a very complete product/package/benefit package to the table.

What are the qualities of retail you enjoy the most?

The change, you move or you die.

What would you say to someone who was interested in a similar profession or field?

Become a dentist – you work four days a week and rarely spend a night away from your family.

What would say has been the highlight of working in retail, and why?

That would be when Dr. Achabal so admired a brown Egon Von Furstenburg suit that I wore, that he went out and bought one of his own! For one brief shining moment, I had made a difference in consumer preference.

Joking aside, it has been very good to my family and me. I think that helping lead a business in positive directions and seeing those directions support families, children's educations, retirements, etc. has lasting rewards. To build a business based on very high ethical and moral standards and to see it flourish is very satisfying.

How did your education here at Santa Clara and particularly your experience with RMI play into your life in the retail world?

It made all the difference in terms of the confidence I felt in my qualifications early on, and in my ability to look at issues from different angles. I still can remember several of the case studies we used that taught valuable lessons in real world marketing. ■



Jay Robinson (RMI Alum '83), senior vice president/director of sales and marketing at Charleston Hosiery, Inc.

Alumni Updates

Many alumni of the Retail Management Institute have found challenging and rewarding positions with various retailers and in related industries. This update includes graduates of RMI and where they are currently.

'83 John Wendland is owner of Portland Bindery, Inc. in Portland, OR.

'84 Susan Miroglio is the operations executive for Clinique (serving Macy's West stores) in Carmichael, CA.

'87 David Duckworth is a finance manager for the NonStop Enterprise Division at Hewlett-Packard in Cupertino, CA.

John Turner, is vice president of global markets at Gartner in San Jose, CA.

'88 Leslie Kesserling is president of Kesserling Communications, LLC in West Linn, OR.

'89 Heather Jauregui is a consultant for The Greenwood Company in Boise, ID.

'90 Linda McNair is the group product marketing manager at Adobe Systems, Inc. in San Jose, CA.

'92 Charles Luke is the district sales manager at ADP National Accounts (ProBusiness Division) in Pleasanton, CA.

'93 Elizabeth Boyes is the marketing manager (Internet Products) for Respond.com (TEOCO) in Fairfax, VA.

'94 Amy Douglass Juillerat is the designer and owner of Couture Collections in Reno, NV.

'94 Derek Seidewand is the senior buyer for Walmart.com in Brisbane, CA.

Stacey Suyama, is the director of retail sales for The Madden Corporation in Waipahu, HI.

'95 Melanie Avelar is a senior marketing manager for Maybelline/Garnier (Division of L'Oreal USA) in New York, NY.

'96 Danielle Ball is an account manager at The Henry Wine Group in Benicia, CA.

Justin Hansel is a sales manager at Hansel Auto Group in Petaluma, CA.

Gina Pastega is working as a volunteer (in the marketing field) for the Peace Corps in Ecuador, South America.

'97 Heather Gille is the planning manager (Europe) for Gap, Inc. in San Francisco, CA.

Giovanna O'Grady is the marketing manager at Actuate Corporation in South San Francisco, CA.

Christine Maron is a national accounts manager (Deutsche Bank) for Sun Microsystems in New York, NY.

Jan-Yu Wend is a senior manager (Asia Regional Management) for Applied Materials, Inc. in Santa Clara, CA.

'98 Matt Raleigh is a lead business analyst (IT) for Gap, Inc. in San Francisco, CA.

Amy Timpe is the emarketing coordinator for Thomson Learning in Belmont, CA.

'99 Michele Chinn Fahey is a merchandise planner for Gap, Inc. in San Francisco, CA.

Shelly Guidera is a planner for DFS Group Limited at the DFS Asia Headquarters in Singapore.

'00 Jessica Hoffman is the Banana Republic Company planner (Non Apparel) for Gap, Inc. in San Francisco, CA.

Marell Jandacka is an associate sourcing manager for furniture in Pottery Barn Teens at Williams - Sonoma, Inc. in San Francisco, CA.

'01 Alice Lu is a sales manager for Dong Vinh Inc. (Restaurant Equipment and Supplies) in San Jose, CA.

Vladimir Raguindin is a senior service associate for Kaiser Permanente in Redwood Shores, CA.

'02 Tim Beach is an analyst at Bank of America in San Francisco, CA.

Hayley Fullerton is an associate program manager for Gap, Inc. in San Bruno, CA.

'03 Erica Cooke is an assistant merchandise manager (Men's Leather and Luggage) for DFS Group Limited in San Francisco, CA.

Eryn Holl is an undergraduate associate with Global Softline Accessories (Watches) for Disney Consumer Products in Burbank, CA.

Lindsey Koberg is an assistant merchandiser (Fine Jewelry) for DFS Group Limited in San Francisco, CA.

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