



## A Moment With... Carol Sanchez

By Claudia Torrens

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**N**atick might not be a very diverse town, but Carol Sanchez, one of the Latino owners of a CPA firm, fits right in. Of Peruvian origin and with 17 years of experience as an accountant, she has established her business in Natick, Sanchez & Santiago, LLC, after working for years in Waltham and Framingham. The 43-year-old Latina spent some time with the Bulletin & Tab this week to tell us about why she chose Natick to work and how Natick welcomed her.

**Natick is not as ethnically diverse as Framingham. What made you establish your business here?**

Well, there are three reasons. One of them was safety. Obviously we stay very late during tax season. My partner and I sometimes have to work until 1 a.m. in the morning. Natick is a very safe place, either at one o'clock in the morning, or one o'clock in the afternoon. So safety was a big deal for us because we are three women. The second reason was that I attended a meeting with Natick Rotary. I met a lot of business owners in downtown Natick and they were very welcoming to me. So, then I obviously joined the Rotary when I came here and I feel it is like a little family in downtown Natick. And then the third was that the price was right. The price was right in comparison to being on Rte. 9 or other places in Framingham.

**Tell us about your background. Hispanics or Latinos sometimes are viewed as owners of small stores. You have a CPA background and worked for a big CPA firm.**

I think that that is a stereotype that was probably true before. I graduated from college and in 1985, I was the only Latina at a big CPA firm, KPMG. But now, after the year 2000, there are a lot of Latino professionals and Latino organizations. There is the Latino MBAs, that held an event that brought Jack Welch from GE into town and there were 500 people there. There is also ALPFA, which is a group of Latino accountants. There is the also the Latino Professional Network and there are a lot of members here in the MetroWest area, from that group. So, there are a lot of Latino professionals. I think that we're just not very visible and vocal, we just kind of go our way and do our thing.

**What about your clients, are they Latino or they are non-Latino?**

I think it is something like 60-40. Sixty % are non-Latinos and 40% are Latino. I have just a handful of Brazilian clients. But primarily, it is because I have grown up here in the US and my partner has grown up in the US. We are bilingual and a bicultural type of firm, we can serve both sides of it. I'm also focusing on small businesses not necessarily individuals. And so, we may have the ability to get more of the population of Latinos, but certainly not all. Our clients come from anywhere between Worcester to Boston. We serve many small businesses from Boston that don't want to go to a large CPA firm in Boston. As a firm, we feel welcomed in Natick, again, mostly because of Rotary. I can walk around the streets of downtown Natick any given day and always run into one of their members. I think it is a group that is changing. I think it is not what Jay Leno had said about being all old white men. But I think it is changing, and there many new members, and women. They are more welcoming. I think people tend not to come here because maybe they feel more comfortable in Framingham but I know Natick it is not that far away and the clients know it is not that far away. It is easy to get to. That's another reason why I like Natick.

**Did you start your business in Natick or did you move it here from Framingham?**

I started it at my home. I live in Framingham and I grew up in Framingham. When we started the business, and took a partner and an office manager, we started looking in Framingham, on Rte. 9 and then in Natick. And I just find it to be more friendly for the reasons I said earlier. Now, we are a year old: we opened our offices on Jan. 3 of 2005. It has been fabulous. We have averaged at least one new client per week in the last 52 weeks. [\[continued\]](#)

**As a business owner downtown how do you deal with the controversial issue of downtown parking?**

We placed ourselves on the parking waiting list a year ago. We have not heard a thing. We don't know where we are on the list now. What we just do every two hours is go out and fill the meter and when we forget, we get ticketed. So I should probably add up how much I have paid to the town of Natick on parking.(laughs). It would probably add up to \$500 in tickets, because it is me, my employees and my clients. If they get a ticket, I have to pay for it. I can't make them pay when we have to sit for long meetings and so forth...It is expensive.