



# TABITHA HARRIER

## Business and Personal Services

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## NEWS

### Flourtown Analyst Ready to be Your Personal Concierge

By Carole Verona



The word "concierge" is derived from the French *comte des cierges*, the "keeper of the candles." In days gone by, the term referred to the servant who looked after visiting noblemen at medieval castles. The concierge made sure that the corridors leading to the guests' chambers were well lit and that, once inside, the noblemen were bathed in a comfortable, safe and soothing light. Later the term "concierge" was used to describe the "keeper of the keys" at public buildings. And during the 1930s, luxury hotels began to distinguish themselves by employing concierges to welcome and assist guests throughout their stay.

Today, the concept of a concierge has blossomed into a new career track, one especially suited to entrepreneurs. Take Claudia Campbell-Edwards, for example. When her position at a global pharmaceutical company was recently eliminated, this Flourtown resident decided to apply her years of management and customer service experience to helping individuals, families and small businesses simplify their lives.

According to a recent survey by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are nearly 16 million two-income families in the country. With everybody working, who has time to shop and run errands?

Who wants to use up hard-earned vacation time sitting at home waiting for cable installation or the delivery of furniture and appliances? Claudia saw a need and in the true entrepreneurial spirit, jumped in to meet it by creating Tabitha Harrier Concierge.

As a senior project analyst at the pharmaceutical company, Claudia was responsible for manning the global help desk for one of the company's main computer systems. When users experienced a problem with the system, they'd call Claudia. "When employees contacted me - sometimes from as far away as Germany or France - they were usually upset, in a panic. They had tight deadlines to meet but were faced with a frozen computer screen. I enjoyed helping them and solving the problem, even from afar," she said.

After 20 years with the company, Claudia was initially upset over the loss of her job but she decided to look on the experience as an opportunity. She took an inventory of her transferable skills and strong points and focused her efforts on how to use them going forward. Her people skills, problem-solving ability and a keen desire to serve others added up to a new career as a personal concierge. "I realized that a concierge does what I enjoy doing most, helping people simplify their lives by solving whatever problems life presents."

Claudia put the past behind her and immediately began planning for the future. And **Tabitha Harrier Concierge** was born. "I love the idea of being a concierge," she said. "Every person that needs this service is different, each request is unique."

To lay the foundation for the business, Claudia recruited a group of highly skilled professionals to work with her as preferred vendors. She knows each one personally and has first-hand experience that they are reputable, do high quality work and use the best products. The services currently offered through Tabitha Harrier Concierge include carpentry, renovations, handyman services, painting, wall-papering and power-washing, and a full-range of tree services. Business and personal writing services are available, too. Claudia also provides traveling and on-site notary services to local businesses. Other services will be added as needed.

Claudia feels that her business will be especially beneficial to new homeowners in the area. "If you know someone who just bought a house, what a great housewarming gift - a concierge who will stay at the house to wait for furniture and appliance delivery or cable installation," she said. For the busy working professional, she also offers personal and gift shopping.

And who is Tabitha Harrier, for whom the business is named? Tabitha is Claudia's five-year-old harrier hound, a breed of hound that is used in packs for hare and fox hunting. "Tabitha was adopted from Etosha Rescue & Adoption Center in Seguin, Texas, a non-profit, no-kill shelter that is best known for hounds and Great Danes. My husband, Jim, and I found out about Tabitha on Etosha's website," Claudia said. Jim flew to Texas to 'meet' Tabitha and to finalize the adoption. The rest, as they say, is history. "I decided to name the business after Tabitha because she's a survivor, too," Claudia said.

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