

Kim Black grew up in one of the “100 best small towns in America” as ranked by author Norm Crampton. A native of Greencastle, Indiana, Kim lived on a pleasant street with her grandmother living across the street. Her parents still live in the house she grew up in. Kim has a younger sister, Jenny, who also now lives in Denver. Kim

expects to see more of her parents as they travel to Denver to see their first grandchild -- her sister is expecting a baby and her parents have recently retired.

Even though Kim and her sister were not that close while growing up in the college town of DePauw University, they are best friends now. When her sister attended college in Denver, they were roommates. Sister Jenny has also been a KM employee, working in catering and the warehouse. Kim added her sister has been a lifesaver over the years.

As the all-American girl, Kim took dance lessons in ballet and tap. She performed in recitals once a year. When Kim turned 15, she gave up dance. But she continued her athletic career as a competitive swimmer. She started swimming when she was eight. Kim swam on a year-round team. However, Kim said it's an easy burnout sport as it's a solitary sport. She stopped swimming after graduating from high school.

Kim traveled west to attend the University of Arizona in Tucson. She said she wanted to get as far away from home as possible. When she visited the campus her senior year in high school and saw students wearing shorts, tank tops and flip-flops, she said, “Wow.” I'm a fan of tropical weather and palm trees,” Kim said. She added it was smart have moved 2,000 miles away as it was important for her to break out of her shell and become more outgoing.

While attending college, Kim studied merchandising and fashion promotion. She always wanted to be a buyer; she also considered being an interior designer or florist. After graduating from college, Kim joined the Joslin's (a department store) management training program in Denver. She enjoyed the position, but said at times she felt like she was a “glorified sales associate” as she worked the register as well as managed people and departments. Plus, another source of dissatisfaction was a lack of buying opportunities with the company.

Kim saw an ad in the newspaper for an assistant retail manager for the Denver Zoo,

**Getting to know
Kim Black: an
all-American girl
and retail buyer
at the Denver Zoo**



and she applied since it was retail, and she loves animals.

Since joining KM Concessions and SSA, Kim has worked at the Los Angeles Zoo and Denver 's Ocean Journey. She's now the retail buyer at the Denver Zoo, where her job entails buying merchandise for the Denver Zoo shops, as well as helping the regional retail teams at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, and Zoo Boise.

Kim shared that she never lacks for a challenge in this organization. "My job keeps me from being bored. I don't consider work to be work; I don't see it as a job. Well, most of the time! It's a passion," she added.

To get to know Kim better, read her responses to questions about her likes and dislikes as well as other interesting insights.

When you're not at work, what do you like to do?

I love movies. My favorite is *Apollo 13*, with Tom Hanks and tells the true story of the moon-bound mission that developed severe trouble. I'm fascinated with airplanes and space. I also like independent movies, which are films initially produced without financing or distribution from a major movie studio. Comedy is my favorite. I also like romantic comedies and movies with stupid humor, such as *Office Space*, a story about company workers who hate their jobs and decide to rebel against their greedy boss.

I also like to go to concerts. You can't beat live music at Red Rocks Amphitheater. My all-time favorite entertainer is Chris Isaak. His Christmas concert was one of the best. I even spent \$150 on a concert ticket to hear him. I like his style of music... how he integrates classical pop and rock sounds with modern touches. He reminds me of Elvis or Liberace. I actually saw Liberace in concert when I was a kid.

I love to shop. I can go all day. Anyone who has shopped with me usually drops. I'm not necessarily buying anything, but looking. I could shop every day. I do have a lot of clothes in my closet – even some with the tags still on them. Now when I buy, I usually try to donate old things I no longer wear, as well as those items that still have the tags still on them, to charity. I also like shoes. You can call me Imelda Marcos Junior. However, almost every pair is black. Black is my favorite color. Well, I guess black isn't really a color, so my favorite color would have to be lavender. Hitting bookstores is also fun, since I love to read.

I do a lot of reading in my free time. My favorite author is Anita Schreve. She combines romantic plots with a keen understanding of emotional complexities inherent in any relationship. I'm really not interested in reading mysteries or science fiction; I'm not really a Harry Potter fan. I do enjoy reading biographies and other non-fiction books.

What thing can you not live without?

I can't live without lipstick...silly I know. I think I got this trait from my grandmother; she didn't go out of the house without it.

What don't you eat?

My motto is, "If it lives in the water, I don't eat it." I grew up in the Midwest, it's meat and potatoes for me!

Who's your hero?

My grandmother is my hero. After my grandfather died a year before I was born, she focused all of her energies on helping raise my sister and me. I appreciate the lessons she taught me, helping to mold me into who I am today. She exposed me to many far away places, taking me to Europe for three weeks just after college, her graduation gift to me. She's now 93 years old and still going strong!

What's your favorite holiday?

Christmas. I love everything about the season...decorating, songs, and shopping, of course. My family celebrates in Colorado, since both my sister and I live here. It will be even more special when my first niece is born!

What's your favorite sport?

I'm a big basketball fan. I like the pros. I grew up in Indiana. Basketball is a big deal... Hoosiers... Bobby Knight. Basketball was big at Arizona where I went to college as well. It was always fun to see a great college game in the arena.

As I get older, I try to stay active. I'm very much into health. It's important to stay fit. Living in Colorado is a motivation. I've gotten back into swimming for fitness. It's a good sport...not too hard on the joints, but it's great cardiovascular exercise. Last summer, I did the Tri for Cure triathlon with my sister and a friend. We finished second out of 62 teams. I did the swimming leg and swam a ½ mile in about 13 minutes. It's different swimming in the open water than in a pool. The water is cold, and you're fighting for space with others. But overall, I would do it again. I'm hoping to complete my first triathlon this year...we'll see...

What don't people believe about you?

I'm outgoing in my job, but quite shy outside of work. I'm very serious at work, but I do have a sense of humor. Really, I can be quite funny at times!

What are your valued possessions?

My photographs are very important to me. I have photographs that were taken throughout my life. It's fun to look back at your life through photos. Some are framed and hanging on my wall, some are in photo albums, but many are in a drawer, waiting for me to do something with them!

If you travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Travel is at the top of my hobby list. Chicago is a favorite domestic spot. I grew up visiting my aunt every summer, who lived right in downtown Chicago. I love the energy of the city, but it still has the Midwest feel to it. When I graduated from high school, my aunt and grandmother took me on a three-week excursion through France and Italy. This exposed me to so many different cultures, and inspired me to want to travel in the future and see new places and different cultures. A few years ago, I went back to Italy, as well as a first time to Germany, when my sister lived there. We spent two weeks exploring those countries.

One of my favorite places is Hawaii, particularly, Kauai with its natural beauty. I like going to the beach. Last year, I was able to visit the Big Island for the first time. The volcanoes are amazing, but it's not the greatest for beach time. Another favorite place of mine is Siena, in the Tuscany area of Italy. It has to be the coolest place on earth. Many considered it to be the best-preserved medieval city in Italy. My dream is to rent a farmhouse and live there for a month. Also, I'd like to visit Egypt, Australia and Greece. Maybe an African safari someday, that is, if I am brave enough!