



TAMMY ALLEN/FOR GLWOMAN

LIFE OF THE PARTY PLANNER

Teresa Barcy never had a desire to own a party planning business, but that didn't stop her from buying seven chafing dishes at random.

"I didn't know why I'd need them, but I just bought them because they were a great deal," she says. "And I had a cookbook addiction, but I never used them."

Then one day in 1989, she felt a calling to help people, specifically those who needed jobs but didn't have professional experience. So she started Professional Party Planner in Grand Ledge. She has since employed high school kids looking for their first jobs and women looking to make ends meet.

She believes she's doing God's will, and that her business is successful for that reason.

"Once all this started, I opened up those cookbooks and every single recipe I tried turned out well," she says.

What's the most common mistake people make when planning a party?

Barcy: I think their biggest mistake is they're always worried they're not going to have enough of anything. The most important thing about a party is its guest list. It doesn't matter what you serve. The people are what make it a good time. The food, the drinks, the service — that's all an added bonus.

What types of parties do you plan?

Barcy: We do a lot of Jimmy Buffet, island-themed parties and Michigan State parties — tailgates and home parties. We do a lot of home-cooked

dinners for people who have guests. One time a gentleman wanted his wife cooked for and catered to, and that was really sweet. And then we've done dinner parties for 150-200 people. Just recently we did a wedding ceremony up in Michigan National Tower. It was done up like it was New York City. And we did a birthday party for someone in a Paris theme.

What's your favorite party planning moment?

Barcy: I have so many older clients, and I've done so many parties for them, they're like a second family to me. In the very early days I worked a

lot with Char Roe. She was an excellent cook, but she was losing her eyesight. She was the one who taught me how to cook. She would show me how to marinate, how to roast. We polished her silver. I'm very fond of those memories. And Mr. and Mrs. Loomis — I planned a Christmas party for them right after my dad passed away, and I was sitting there watching him with his children, and really missing my dad. He came over and gave me a big hug; without needing to say anything he came over. I'll always remember how special that was.

What do you like best about your job?

Barcy: I like working with my staff and with my clients. I get really involved in their lives — in their joys and their sadnesses. I have a group of ladies, they have a girls' week, and for a whole week I go to their cabin Up North and cook them their lunch and dinner. They don't have to worry about anything. I enjoy going up there because they've become my friends. And I'm really lucky to be surrounded by talented and professional staff. God has blessed me in that way too, because I couldn't do this by myself. Everybody has a special talent and special things they bring to the party.