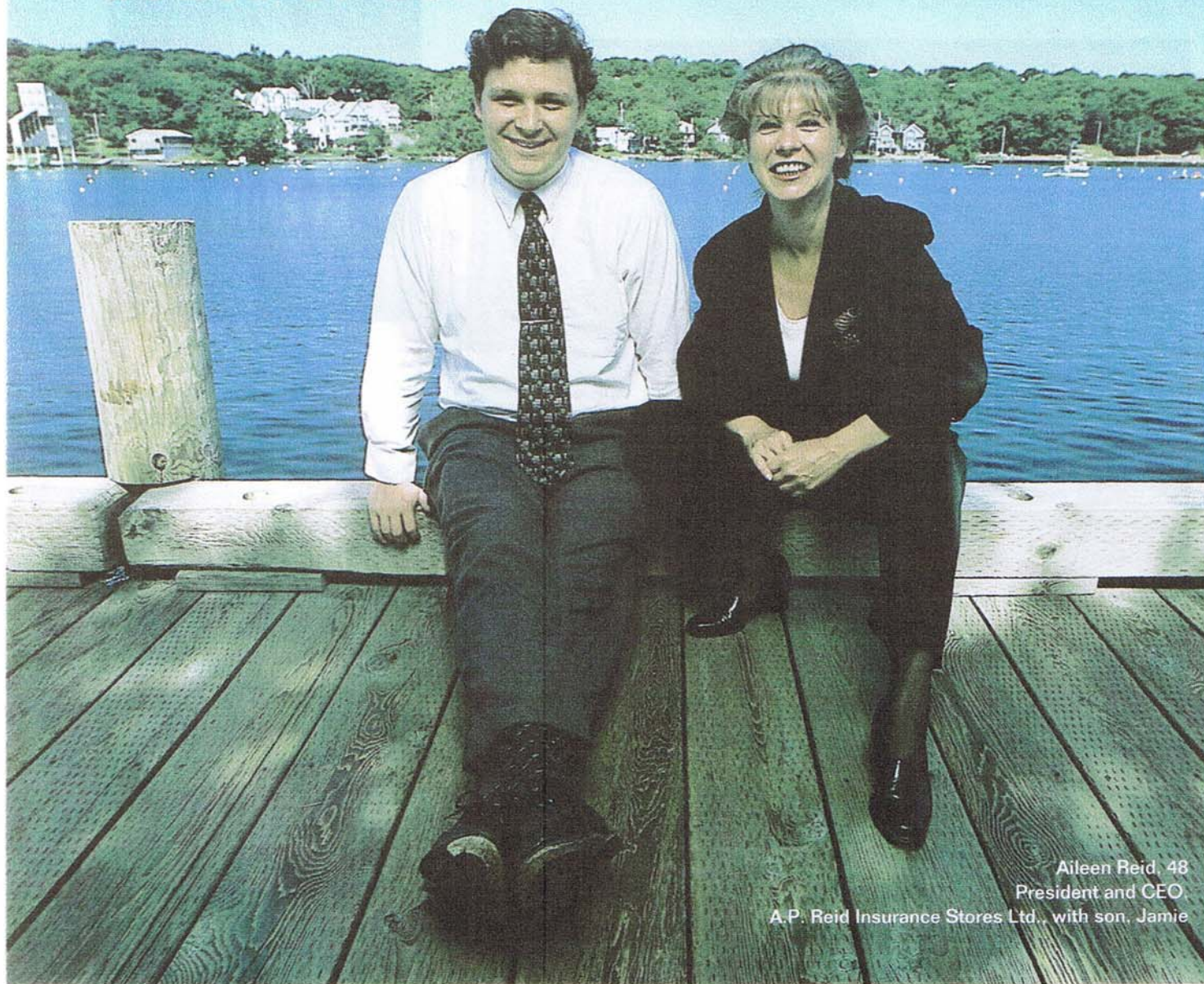


women at work



Aileen Reid, 48
President and CEO
A.P. Reid Insurance Stores Ltd., with son, Jamie

The nurturer

Aileen Reid is proof that motherhood and a career can mix. In 1979 her boss told her that she would never make partner at the insurance firm at which she was working. The reason? She wouldn't be able to deal with major clients because she was a woman. She soon quit that job and went into business for herself.

Determined to master not only a career but also her family, she toted her young son, Jamie, to the office, meetings, and trade shows. "It was a male-dominated world at that time, and I was a single mother," she says. "When I started working for myself I brought

Jamie everywhere. I'm sure everyone thought I was eccentric."

Twenty-three years later, Reid has done more than just climb the corporate ladder and raise her son. Now she manages Dartmouth, N.S.-based A.P. Reid Insurance Stores Ltd., one of the largest Atlantic Canadian-owned insurance brokerages with nine chains and annual revenues of more than \$13 million. But it hasn't always been easy. In 1990 a trusted employee embezzled thousands of dollars from the company, costing Reid \$500,000 and hundreds of clients. "Business is full of challenges,"

she says, "and sooner or later you'll be tested. Those who can rise to the occasion stay in business."

Reid also recognizes that effective management-employee relations have helped her company grow. "How can [my employees] care about the company if I don't?" she says. "If I don't consider their interests, where's the fair trade-off?" And while her business is thriving, so is her family: her son, who is now 27 years old, still hangs out with her at the office—now as one of the firm's managing partners. Times have changed.

— Corrie Fletcher-Naylor