

## has no guilt about family time



IAN SMITH/VANCOUVER SUN

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was not as aggressive as I could say, 'I'll be at your football game, I'll be at your lacrosse game.'

"Certainly if I wanted to aggressively pursue my career I wouldn't have been being fair to the children; I would have been making choices that were strictly for me as a person. I chose to be a mother, the children didn't have any choice and I couldn't say, 'I'll be your mother when I can while I'm trying to become commissioner.'"

Career success for women today isn't measured only by the

size of the office or the paycheck. It's being measured in the accomplishments of a balanced life and in choices.

For Hall, the time off also allowed her to fulfil a long-time wish to chronicle her experience as one of the early women to join the RCMP as a regular member in her recently released book, *The Red Wall: A Woman in the RCMP*.

Almost 20 years Hall's junior, Jill Earthy, 34, has made her working life fit around her two children, aged three years and 10 months. Before her first child was born, Earthy sold her com-

pany, a temporary-staffing service that specialized in the event industry.

"I wouldn't have been able to take time off with my business before when I was running it on my own," said Earthy, who took four months off when her first child was born.

Recently committing to a three-day week as executive director of the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs, Earthy has also started up momcafe.net, a website and event organizer to bring together enterprising mothers. The first event is scheduled for Sept. 21 and Earthy said it is

geared to bringing women together in a supportive network, where they can meet others facing similar challenges.

"There was a need for moms to connect," she said. "They may be thinking, 'Should I go back to work,' or 'My job is not working for me, I can't put in the 80-hour weeks I did before I had kids — can I do my job in three days a week and still spend time with my family?'"

Earthy's approach to her work also reflects a confidence and a refusal to apologize for the time her kids take.

"I don't feel guilty leaving at three to pick my daughter up a pre-school," she said.

But not all women share that confidence.

"When I was going on mat leave and I went in to talk to the dean, I apologized for the fact that I was going to start a family," said Kirkpatrick. "It wasn't until after I thought, 'Why did I do that?'"

"That was completely self-inflicted. I've been in the situation many times where a woman has come in to tell me they are pregnant or they are adopting and they think they are coming to tell me some tragic thing — they are going to have a baby, but they are so conflicted about how it impacts their job."

Kirkpatrick points out there is also subtle discrimination in the marketplace when placing women into critical roles.

"If you are 55 it is not an issue, but if you are 30 or 35 there is the concern by the potential employer — 'I am going to put you in a critical position and you will take maternity leave.' They view it as more risky to put a woman into a critical role."

Some careers are seen as being more incompatible with motherhood than others.

"I can think of one very successful lawyer who had a day nanny, a night nanny and a weekend nanny so she could be successful in her law career," said Denise Coutts, executive director of the Minerva Foundation for BC Women, who says her career choice early on to work in the non-profit sector stemmed from a need to have flexibility to care for her daughter, who is now