

## Couni Young Go Go Wardrobe Pro

A native of Chicago, Couni Young developed an interest in art early on. She didn't recognize it then, but her penchant for creating clothes would culminate in a career as a costume designer for movies.

Young remembers her grandmother cut patterns for *Vogue* magazine, a job she called less-than-glamorous. By the time she entered middle school, she would design and sew clothes for her Barbie doll. Always the entrepreneur, Young started selling those Barbie clothes – for 5 or 10 cents – to her classmates. By high school she earned a reputation as the go-to source for last-minute prom dresses.

She didn't instantly gravitate toward a career in fashion. "My dreams were far from becoming a costume designer," Young said. "It just happened to be one of the stops on my journey through life."

Young earned a bachelor's degree in biology, and later joined the Chicago Fire Department. From there, she began a career as a trauma nurse. While working in the Emergency Room, she had to wear scrubs. She wasn't thrilled with the options available and began sewing her own. The low-rise flare leg scrubs became so popular she started her own business. Though she was successful for a while, the discount industry took a toll on the business.

It wasn't until Young met Roemehl Hawkins, a costume designer on shows like *Desperate Housewives* and *Entourage*, that she began sewing again. One day while visiting Hawkins on a movie set, a seamstress was fired. Young mentioned she could sew and offered to fill in until a replacement could be hired. She finished the film and was invited to train under Hawkins' expertise in Los Angeles. Soon after, she joined the Detroit/Pontiac Stage Employees Union, IATSE Local 38. That's when her film career officially began. "If there is an open door, I'm coming through it – guaranteed," said Young. "My mother taught me that."

Young creates then sketches her own designs. "There is a lot involved in the process," said Young. If time permits, she makes her own patterns, builds the garments, and ensures they are camera-ready.

Young created her company, Go Go Wardrobe Pro, to expand her efforts in the film business. She recently served as Faye Dunaway's personal stylist and costume designer for a movie shot in Detroit. "It was my first gig without training wheels," she said, "and I didn't fall!"

As the film business is growing in Michigan, so too is Young's company. Go Go Wardrobe Pro is a mobile wardrobe department equipped with sewing machines, steamers, computers and anything needed to stock a movie wardrobe trailer. "We have garments, accessories, a warehouse to hold it all and a stellar crew to run it all," she said.

Young trusts in her "A-Team" wardrobe crew, which includes her assistant costume designer May McClurg, who trained on shows like *In Living Color* and *Martin*, and researcher Rozzi Bryant who can sniff out any necessary information – including Val Kilmer's shoe size – immediately.

"You have to be quick to last in this business," said Young. "It's a fast-paced work environment with little margin for error. A mistake could cost a production company thousands of dollars and believe me, I don't want my wardrobe department's name attached to that bill."

In addition to her work as a costume designer, she is married to Robert Young, producer of the Young American Comedy Tour and owner of Young & Sons Construction in Farmington Hills. Together, they have two sons – Ian, age 10, and Cameron, age 8. Young currently resides in Commerce Township, Mich.

*To keep up with Couni Young and her latest projects, become a fan of Go Go Wardrobe Pro on Facebook and follow @GoGoWardrobePro on Twitter.*

###