

The AZ Insider: Economy Affecting PHX Divorce Rate?

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

"The AZ Insider" with Kathy Shayna Shocket: Get the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and celebrity news.



This week: is the economy affecting the Phoenix divorce rate among wealthy?

The divorce rate in the Phoenix area has always been high. About 51% of marriages in Phoenix area end in divorce. Some analysts say the economy has caused the divorce rate to decline- causing many couples to wait until they can afford two separate households. Others claim that the economic climate has caused mounting tension for already unhappy couples and driven them to divorce court sooner than later.

Hey, Hugh Hefner finally filed a couple of weeks ago for divorce from wife Kimberly Conrad. They've been separated for 11 years and remained friendly while raising their two children.



(It was about that time that the former Playboy playmate Kimberly had just moved into the house next door to the Playboy mansion, That's when she and Hef invited me over for an afternoon interview, I walked with Kimberly outside her separate house with the kids- and then chatted with Hef privately in the mansion. Hef in silky PJ's of course.) Anyway.. the point is that Hef is having a few financial problems and had to sell that \$28 million house. Kimberly's now suing him.

While some couples have seen the value of their primary assets- their equity in their home- drop- and may stay together longer – others who own businesses see this as a better time to get divorced. "Because we are at the lowest point in the market right now, it may cost less for one spouse to buy out the other in the business," says divorce attorney Angie Hallier. (Angie and husband Gerard are pictured below during their recent getaway in the Hampton's. They've been happily married for 12 years.)



A case in point locally where the ownership of a business did not factor into the relationship is Carrie Martz's pending divorce. She has owned her own company for 30 years. The Scottsdale based advertising and public relations exec and husband Roger Davis have just started divorce proceedings. "Economics, which always adds stress, was not the reason," says Carrie, of her 7 year marriage. "We hope to work through this amicably. We both had our own businesses before we were married and that wont' change."



Pictured with Carrie above from left to right are Lannie Sater, Kasey Schwartz, Brooke Martz-O'Connor and Amanda Houser. This is from last year's party at Hanger One which benefitted Banner Alzheimer's Institute. It's on my list of favorite parties.

Mark your calendar

So mark your calendar for this year's benefit coming up on Oct. 24 at Olive & Ivy Restaurant + Marketplace hosted by the Women's Council of the Banner Alzheimer's Institute. The menu includes palate pleasing foods from Fox Restaurant Concepts that meet the scientific criteria for brain health. Recent studies suggest that high cholesterol diets may contribute to stroke and brain cell damage, and growing evidence shows that a diet rich in antioxidants from dark vegetables and fruits may help protect brain cells. Cheryl Mendez and Kim Townsend are co-chairing the fun affair, "A Night to Remember."

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