

Los Angeles Zoo Unit Controller Blanca Roberts knows the score



Most descriptions for accounting-related jobs include the words analytical and detail-oriented. Blanca Roberts definitely has both of those traits.

In 1992, she started working at the Los Angeles Zoo as a food service cashier after she graduated from high school. When Service Systems Associates (SSA) took over the food and gift operations at the zoo in a joint venture with Centerplate, she kept her job and her responsibilities grew over the years. Today as unit controller, Blanca manages the accounting functions, the cash room as well as the human resources department at the visitor service operations at the zoo.

Even though Blanca is not married, she is in a long-term relationship. Blanca has been dating Tony for 13 years. He's a mechanic who owns an auto repair shop. She laughingly said that her car is in perfect running condition.

The smartest thing that Blanca said she ever did was to ask Tony out on a date. They first met when they were 17, but at that time, they were just friends. They lost touch with each other. She saw him again a couple years later – and liked what she saw. But he didn't show much interest in her, she said. "So I pursued him. It took him a little bit of time to realize what I was doing."



Blanca claims that dating Tony is the one of the smartest things she has done.

In their free time, they enjoy going to a local restaurant, having a few beers and talking. Blanca claims it's super relaxing. She enjoys watching sports on television, particularly basketball, but she usually doesn't pay attention until the last few minutes.

When her biological clock started ticking,

she adopted two dogs. Blanca spoils her Chihuahua mix dogs, named Sophie and Guiesppe. She also spoils her three nieces and one nephew, who live nearby. She calls herself their "fun aunt." Her favorite holiday is Christmas because she can spend time with them and watch them open their gifts.

Blanca said her hero is her mother because of everything she has accomplished. She said her mother had her at a really young age and then had another daughter a few years later. Even though Blanca's mom never finished high school, she has become pretty successful. Her mother currently lives in Mexico with her husband and her second family of two daughters and one son. The family plans to move back to the Los Angeles area next year.

One day Blanca would like to visit her birthplace, which is Roswell, New Mexico. You may recall many UFO proponents maintain that a crashed alien craft and bodies were recovered here in the late 1940s, and that the military engaged in a cover-up. The incident has turned into a widely known pop culture phenomenon, making Roswell synonymous with UFOs. Blanca laughingly said she wanted to visit Roswell so that she could visit her relatives!

Blanca said she is a pretty cautious person who doesn't take too many risks. So it's somewhat surprising that fantasy books and programs appeal to her. She particularly enjoyed the *Twilight* series, which is a set of four vampire-based fantasy/romance novels. Her favorite TV show is *Lost*, a popular sci-fi series depicting plane crash survivors stranded on an island of mystery and danger encountering odd things.

She describes herself as a pretty serious person, yet kind of weird. Not sure why Blanca thinks she's weird; was it because she dyed her hair purple when she was a teenager?

While Blanca may describe herself as a serious person, it's evident she knows how to laugh and have a good time while enjoying her job and spending time with her family and friends.