

BUSINESS VANCOUVER 2012 **Forty** under 40

Maili Wong

Vice-president, portfolio manager and investment adviser, **CIBC Wood Gundy**
Age: 33

Maili Wong was only 30 years old when she was named vice-president at **HSBC Securities**. She was one of the youngest investment advisers to be promoted to that position firm-wide.

But if it weren't for her father, she would probably be a doctor right now.

Wong was on track to study science and pre-med at **UBC** when her dad, who is also an investment adviser, suggested she look into business courses.

"He thought it would fit my strengths and personality," she said. "He's probably the only Chinese man who told his daughter to forget medicine and go into business!"

Wong was one of only 16 students accepted to **UBC's** portfolio-management foundation program, which allows students to manage a \$3 million endowment.

"It was so fascinating to me, because I was able to research companies from all different industries and sectors but find common threads that made them successful," she said.

In September of 2001, Wong moved to New York to work at **Merrill Lynch's** headquarters, located right next door to the World Trade Center. Just one week after she started work, two planes struck the twin towers.



The chaos that followed for days after the terrorist attack shook the 22-year-old Vancouverite "to my core." Against the urgings of her family, she decided to stay in New York.

"I had worked so hard to get that opportunity," she said.

Wong returned to Vancouver in 2006 and joined her father's team at the **Wong Group**. In 2011, the group was recruited to **CIBC Wood Gundy**. They are now one of the top-ranked investment teams in B.C.

Now the mother of two children under three, Wong knows first-hand the challenges women face in finding work-

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life balance. She mentors other young women in business, and also created **CIBC's** Leading Women in Wealth investment education series. ■

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Birthplace: **Vancouver**

Where do you live now: **Vancouver**

Highest level of education: **B.Comm. in finance with honours, Sauder School of Business, UBC, and chartered financial analyst designation**

Car or chosen mode of transport: **Mercedes GLK**

Currently reading: **Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman**

Last CD bought or music downloaded: **Coexist by the xx**

Favourite app: **Babycorner** – it tracks our babies' feeds, activities and milestones allowing my husband and I to be in touch with what our kids are doing real-time, at all times

Favourite local restaurant: **For dates with my husband, Cioppino's in Yaletown. For sushi business lunches, Ajsai in Kerrisdale**

Profession you would most like to try: **I love what I do, but I've always had an interest in studying medicine**

What you think stops people from succeeding in business: **Fear of failure. There will always be challenges along the way, and it's how one chooses to deal with them that separates success from failure**

Toughest business or professional decision: **Returning to Vancouver from New York City**

Advice you would give the younger you: **Always do what you believe is the right thing to do, seek out excellent mentors and ask lots of questions. Remember to help others along the way so they can learn from your mistakes**

What's left to do: **Professionally, continue to grow my team into one of Canada's leading wealth management advisory teams built on long-term relationships providing high-quality client service, value and advice. Personally, being the best role model I can be for my children**

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