



## PRESS RELEASE

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### One Woman National Business Conference® in Year Two Draws National Interest; Diversity

HOUSTON (August 17, 2010) – Exceptional small business development content presented by more than 80 subject experts and entrepreneurial inspiration were hallmarks of the 2nd Annual One Woman National Business Conference (One Woman®), hosted by Texas Business Alliance (TBA) with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee as the 2010 Honorary Chairwoman. Drawing hundreds of culturally diverse entrepreneurs as young as 15 for the two-day small business development program held at the Omni Houston Hotel on August 6-7, 2010, conference organizers have begun receiving requests for this unique women's small business development conference to travel to markets outside of Houston. The 2011 One Woman® host city will soon be announced. As well, 2011 speaker's applications from several nationally recognized presenters have already been submitted for consideration.

"From start to finish, One Woman® 2010 served to inspire and equip a diverse group of entrepreneurs with an arsenal of knowledge, know-how and know-who to continue on their journey with measurable success," said Texas Business Alliance Founder and CEO Jeffrey L. Boney. "This year, we set out to amass the best educators, from across the country, to provide a diverse audience of seasoned and budding business owners with the information and tools needed to increase their capacity and the avenue to make key connections. Because Texas is one of the most culturally diverse states in the U.S., another goal of One Woman® is to draw an ethnically diverse conference audience. It is imperative that all cultures work together to increase capacity, create jobs, and improve the economy in communities where we live and work. That's what the Texas Business Alliance is about."

Over the course of two days, women in business had an opportunity to receive on-the-spot business loans, meet with key decision makers from local, state and federal government entities and corporations, and gain knowledge on what makes for a profitable business and "whole" person.

New business owner Mauda Vercher shared, "I left One Woman with a renewed spirit, encouraged, and armed with valuable resources, and new alliances which will benefit my endeavors from here to come. I can't possibly verbalize what this experience meant to me. The value that I received there will most certainly remain as lasting impressions, which will shape my future as a new entrepreneur."

Other conference attendees came to One Woman® with no intent to start a business, but left with a desire to more fully realize their talents as did attendee Billie Evans, "I just want to thank you for putting on a wonderful conference as this was my first time attending. I left the conference with a positive attitude and learned how to become a successful business woman. I don't have my own business nor did I ever consider having one until I attended this conference. The workshops that I attended were very beneficial to my everyday life and the networking with others was wonderful. I look forward to next year so I can attend again."

One Woman® culminated with the Soaring Heights Awards, which recognize corporate and governmental professionals who create or champion exceptional minority- and women-owned enterprise initiatives both internal and external to their organizations. Honored were: **James Harris**, director, supplier diversity, H-E-B; **Cheryl Linville**, small business liaison officer, United Space Alliance; **Eva J. Milko**, director, procurement, MillerCoors LLC; **Michelle Sourie Robinson**, director, supplier diversity, The Home Depot and **Jewel Smith**, manager, supplier diversity, CenterPoint Energy.

TBA presented the People's Choice Award to Director of HP Global Supplier Diversity **Brian Tippens**. The People's Choice Award is awarded annually to the person who demonstrates genuine care for the success of minorities and women in business, strives to equip and better prepare small business owners through education and is deemed by suppliers as a go-to advocate.

Recognizing the challenges small business owners encounter on a daily basis, TBA awarded **Sue Habib**, CEO, Lexis Florist with the "Still Standing" Award. Habib immigrated to the U.S. from Lebanon 25 years ago. Single parent of three small children, speaking no English, starting her business with a loan collateralized with her jewelry, and overcoming a failed partnership which cost her more than \$1 million, Habib persevered to become the premier florist in Houston. (Habib video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSsH0Nr2ZYk>)

Taking home \$5,000 in cash and prizes as winners of the One Woman® Shark Tank competition were Marylyn Harris, president, Harlland Healthcare Consulting and Lisa Reyna, president and founder, International Consulates.

Actress and director Kim Fields summed the two days with a rousing discussion on the keys to reinvention and the five most dangerous women to steer clear of. Fields' keys to reinvention are: be honest about where you are right now; embrace change with love and excitement, not fear and anxiety and expect a season of transition; set realistic goals: remember, setting goals doesn't mean setting limits on God; the balancing act - understand that being an empowered woman is not synonymous with emasculating our men; it's important to embrace our desire to need as needing doesn't make you weak; and refuse to compete with women or men. The five most dangerous women to steer clear of according to Fields are: 1) women who are not walking in their purpose, 2) insecure women with power, 3) controlling women, 4) desperate women and 5) unforgiving women.

The conference included many highlights. Kicking off the two-day event was a forum called "God in the Market." New to One Woman®, this forum taught by small business owner Sharwin Wiltz Boney, COO, BoneFide Development and Investment Group, shared the value of running a business with bible-based principles at the core. Several business owners gave their testimonies including speaker and author Bonnie Monych who shared, "Studies reveal 80 percent of people hate their jobs, they spend over 75 percent of their time at work doing activities that drain them and only 25 percent perform activities that invigorate them. I truly believe God is challenging each of us to open the door to Him at work. I truly believe when 'us' girls unite with God's blessing, there isn't anything we can't do!"

The Black & Brown Symposium, moderated by Fox 26 Anchor Mike Barajas and Lane Staffing CEO Carla Lane, shed light on the shared challenges in the areas of entrepreneurialism, education and employment. Speaker Marshawn Evans delivered a motivational introduction and Port Commissioner Kase L. Lawal was recognized with the Soaring Eagle Award for his exceptional community support and business achievement.

During a power-packed panel discussion of Fortune 500 women executives, the Corner Office Chat candidly revealed how women in corporate America can climb the ladder of success without stepping on others.

An evening panel tackled tough issues surrounding male/female relationships in a fun, lighthearted manner. Moderated by Comedian Marcus D. Wiley and television program host and producer Rebecca Spera, panel members candidly shared their personal and professional perspectives on communication between the sexes, as well as entrepreneurial and corporate relationships.

More than 80 subject experts such as Dr. Randal Pinkett, Dayna Steele, Karen McCullough, Julie Haralson, Brian Tippens, Amy Tinsley, MaryJane Mudd, Laura Lopez and Cheryl Harrison presented workshops on a variety of topics from treating your business as a career as opposed to a hobby, transitioning from and learning how to do business with corporate America and new marketing trends, to doing business with NASA and learning how to sell your value proposition to potential customers and contracting entities.

Nearly fifty small business owners and 15 authors were represented at the expo and authors' row. Three of the businesses were teen-owned and launched their enterprises at One Woman® after participating in TBA's seven-month small business incubator program called the Youth Entrepreneurship Academy®. Lisa Tatum of Grand Lady Basket Boutique expressed, "I wanted to let you know what a wonderful time we had at the conference. We have been doing expos and conferences for a long time, but this was the most wonderful vending experience we have ever had. I have had nothing but good things to say about the entire weekend. I also want to say how moved I was at the young people and the positive impact the organization is making on them. I am so thankful to have been a part of the conference and I look forward to the next one."

Comerica Bank sponsored the Extreme Youth Entrepreneur forum where teens were invited to hear from participants in the Youth Entrepreneurship Academy® and then get a day-in-the-life of an entrepreneur experience through a "reality" game called "YEA Amazing Apprentice" won by Faith Miller, Youth Entrepreneurship Academy® participant and owner of Faithful Photography and Graphic Design. During the session, Comerica Bank's Public Affairs Senior Vice President Irvin Ashford Jr. shared tips on credit and business. Kerry Willrich Jr., Youth Entrepreneurship Academy® participant and president and CEO, Willrich Real Estate Group shared his learnings, "Mr. Ashford taught me to keep it simple. There is no need to have multiple credit cards. One does the job of two or three. Secondly, when you start any business the first thing you want to do is secure capital. If you have no capital, you have no business. Lastly, I learned, when owning and running a business, there are three people you want to become best friends with -- your accountant, attorney and banker." Disc jockey "Nnete" from 97.9 FM The Box in Houston moderated the forum.

Musical entertainment was provided by Psalmists Loretta Williams Gurnell and Melanie Mitchell, and A Touch of Keys featuring pianist Eric Wright.

Finally, several free forums open to the public were included on the subjects of health and beauty, food and beverage, career planning and, the conference finale, an arts exhibition and forum. KPRC Local 2 News Anchor Jerome Gray moderated the panel discussion regarding Houston's unique art world, the strengths and challenges of working in the arts, the business of gallery ownership and art collection, and tips directly from successful artists and experts: Reginald Adams, Museum of Cultural Arts Houston (MOCAH); Deborah M. Colton, Colton & Farb Gallery; Richard Graber, Houston Arts Alliance; Ann Johnson, artist/educator; and Lester Marks, International Art Advisory Services.

During the conference, public artist Reginald Adams painted live with participation from conference-goers. The artwork was titled "Co-creation in the Vortex." The painting was auctioned live and purchased by Michelle Sourie Robinson of The Home Depot. Robinson has donated the painting to Oklahoma University's Jimmy Everest Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders in Children, which is based in Oklahoma City. The facility is where her three-year old nephew, Nathan Johnson, underwent surgery to remove a diseased kidney a day following his October 2009 diagnosis. Nathan then completed radiation and 33 weeks of chemotherapy for childhood cancer and is now disease free. Robinson stated, "The painting was purchased in celebration of Nathan's healing and the top notch care he received, with the hope that it might encourage and inspire future patients and their families who are in the middle of the vortex of storms of their lives." A portion of the auction proceeds will fund Class II of the Texas Business Alliance Youth Entrepreneur Academy®.

"Our conference slogan is Changing the Face of Business - One Woman at a Time," remarked Boney. "We are very thankful to the conference participants, speakers, corporate and governmental sponsors, small business owners, and community and media partners who also support the conference slogan and vision of equipping women in business with the necessary tools and capital to succeed. We look forward to seeing everyone again August 2011."

One Woman National Business Conference® organizers are currently accepting 2011 speaker applications and requests for involvement. For more details, please visit [www.onewomanconference.com](http://www.onewomanconference.com) or call 281.213.9554.

One Woman® 2010 supporters include: Continental Airlines, LaneStaffing, Inc., Shell Oil Company, Capital One Bank, H-E-B, UnitedHealthcare, Comerica Bank, BoneFide Development & Investment Group, AT&T, Rose Imaging Specialists, HP, Port of Houston Authority, TXU, Clear Wireless Internet, Luby's, Constant Contact, CenterPoint Energy, Pretty Quick Delivery Services, Abidawn Wellness Center, Northwestern Mutual Insurance/Mia Brown, MWH Public Relations, The Digital Broadcasting Network, Women's Specialty Healthcare, Four22 Creative, Women's Business Enterprise Alliance, NAWBO, Jobing.com, This Woman's Work, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Houston Single Source, Houston Networking News, Empowered Entrepreneurs, Sisters Network Inc., Radio One, Fox 26, My 20, Houston's Channel 55, Finalcall.com, D-MARS.com, NewswireHouston.com, Black Enterprise Magazine, Rolling Out Magazine, WeTexas, Texas on the Go, Houston Black Book and The Blue Zero.

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Photo caption: Sue Habib, CEO, Lexis Florist (center) celebrates winning the "Still Standing" Award with friends (L-R) Debbie Dillard, Hanan Reehani, Rhonda Schroeder and Hoda Sahyoun. Awarded during the 2nd Annual One Woman National Business Conference® on Saturday, August 7, at the Omni Houston Hotel, the Still Standing Award recognizes a woman small business owner who has overcome tremendous odds to become the top in her field. Habib will celebrate her 25th business anniversary this year. After immigrating to the U.S. from Lebanon as a single parent of three small children, no start-up funds and speaking little English, Habib has built a solid business making Lexis Florist the premier floral design company in Houston. Even after a failed partnership which cost her more than \$1 million, Habib is still standing strong as a result of her tenacity, philanthropy, exceptional service and unique floral designs.

Photo credit: Grady Carter Photography