

Welcome to the 2008 TBBJ BusinessWoman of the Year publication

This is no place for marketing hype. *Tampa Bay Business Journal* readers know they don't get that here.

As you will soon see in the following pages, strong voices of accomplished women ring loud as their stories are told. As individuals, these women have worked very hard to achieve their status in the business community, and as driving forces in their companies and government, they are influential within their respective sectors and beyond.

Annually, TBBJ brings businesswomen into the spotlight through the BusinessWoman of the Year awards process and the Women-owned businesses List.

Why do we recognize them? It's a question prompting discussion over lunch, over the phone and in the newsroom. As diverse as women in business are, so are the answers to this question.

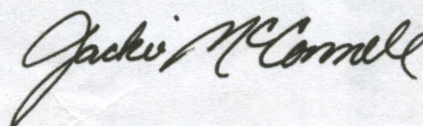
A simple, direct, Olympic-style response came from my 18-year-old daughter, and I would like to share that with you: "To show it can be done."

As successful women in business know, questioning is good, and annually during the BusinessWoman of the Year awards process, TBBJ becomes more exposed to the thoughts of people in business about this particular focus on women. Comments overwhelmingly are positive, and they come with gratitude, but also there are reservations expressed concerning changing times and a continued necessity for and interest in BusinessWoman of the Year awards.

Generational and political differences come forward as women support the awards and as they question them. Positive reinforcement such as that which comes with these awards is difficult to knock. On the other hand, some people see the awards as separatist, counter to women's quest for integration into the mainstream.

But, as anyone who reads this publication and/or who attends the annual awards ceremonies sees, there is great value in getting to know the winners. They are the gold medalists in our business community.

Silver and bronze medalists along with the rest of us out there attending business games or watching them become riveted when offered the opportunity to learn what it's like going for the gold. For the rest of us, while in our own way we are winners when we do well in business, the 2008 businesswomen of the year bring us out of our everyday and demonstrate entrepreneurially and in the corporate world, manufacturing, publishing and nonprofits what can be done.



Jackie McConnell
Managing Editor

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Judges for the 2008 BusinessWoman of the Year Awards



Penny Hulbert,
founder and
president of Links
Financial LLC



Anne Lee, president
at First Bank



Winnie Marvel, owner
of Magnon Jewelers
and the *Tampa Bay
Business Journal's* 2007
Business Services
BusinessWoman
of the Year winner

**TAMPA
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4350 W. Cypress
Tampa
813.

tampabay.com

PUBLISHER
Bridgette Mill
bmill@bizjournals.com

EDITOR
Alexis Mueller
amueller@bizjournals.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Jackie McConnell
jmcconnell@bizjournals.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pam Huff
phuff@bizjournals.com

SENIOR STAFF WRITER
PUBLIC COMPANIES
Margie Manning
Health care, banking
mmanning@bizjournals.com

STAFF WRITERS
Margaret Cashill
General assignment
mcashill@bizjournals.com

Larry Halstead
Hospitality and transportation
lhalstead@bizjournals.com

Michael Hinnman
Real estate, technology, media and marketing
mhinnman@bizjournals.com

Janet Leiser
Commercial real estate
jleiser@bizjournals.com

Jane Meinhardt
Finance, manufacturing
jmeinhardt@bizjournals.com

RESEARCH DIRECTOR
Charles Lewis
clewis@bizjournals.com

DESIGN COORDINATOR
Abdel Rios
arios@bizjournals.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kathleen Cabble
kcabble@bizjournals.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Robert Yaniz Jr.
ryaniz@bizjournals.com

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Dean Azevedo
dazevedo@bizjournals.com

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR
Tami Isa
tisa@bizjournals.com

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT
Katie Antiporda
kantiporda@bizjournals.com

Deirdre Barry
dbarry@bizjournals.com

Erica Shea
eshea@bizjournals.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Heather Bailey
hbailey@bizjournals.com

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND CIRCULATION
Angie M. Joseph
ajoseph@bizjournals.com

EVENTS/CIRCULATION CONSULTANT
Alyssa Bolognini
abolognini@bizjournals.com

SENIOR CIRCULATION CONSULTANT
Michael Beddo
mbeddo@bizjournals.com

CIRCULATION/MARKETING CONSULTANTS
Carol Alvarado
calvarado@bizjournals.com

Ian Anderson
ianderson@bizjournals.com

Sylvia Thomas
sylvia@bizjournals.com

CIRCULATION/MARKETING CONSULTANT
Katelyn Frunzi
kfrunzi@bizjournals.com

BUSINESS MANAGER
Kathryn Bonney
kbonney@bizjournals.com

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
Michele Wisma
mwisma@bizjournals.com

FRONT DESK ADMINISTRATOR
Olga Cortes
ocortes@bizjournals.com

American Business

The Business Journal
City Business Journal
Suite 400, Charlotte, NC
An Equal Opportunity
Circulations member



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