



# Women of Distinction 08

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## From the WODA Co-Chairs



**Jennifer Parker-Atherton**

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the publication celebrating the 10th annual Women of Distinction Awards (WODA). Staying with the theme of last year, which was modeled after different awards programs, we honored 36 finalists in 12 different categories. Our goal was to honor these women who have shown tremendous growth in their chosen fields and who represent our Blossoming Through The Years theme.

The Women of Distinction Awards, along with the National Association of Women Business Owners of Southern Nevada (NAWBO), are proud to honor one exceptional woman in each of our 12 categories for their achievements and contributions to their businesses and/or organizations. These women have achieved amazing things and are inspirational to us all.

We were very excited this year to have Kelly Clinton as our mistress of ceremonies. She is a standout performer who has truly blossomed through her years. In her career, she has worked with Wayne Newton, co-hosted "Vegas Live" with Clint Holmes and Sheena Easton and has been a headliner at The Stirling Club. Thank you, Kelly!

The National Association of Women Business Owners of Southern Nevada and WODA would not be possible without the support of our corporate partners, member partners, and WODA event sponsors. We ask that you join us in thanking them for their time, professional services and for assisting in helping NAWBO Southern Nevada continue to grow.

In addition, we would also like to thank all of the companies that contributed items or services for our silent auction. All these donations are an important part of our event and we hope that you all enjoy bidding on the great items. A special thank

you to Toni Jo Artz and the Speaker's Advantage for donating our \$1,000 cash raffle prize.

Proceeds from the Women of Distinction Awards will be donated to the Women of Distinction Foundation. It is our goal, along with NAWBO's, to fully represent the diverse makeup of the women business-owner community through increased representation within ethnic and minority communities and to expand access to leadership opportunities. This foundation is being created as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that is designed to provide microloans to newly established women business owners. It provides a funding solution to businesses that may not otherwise be able to qualify for more traditional lending solutions. We look forward to helping women as their journey begins as an emerging woman business owner.

To conclude, as co-chairs of the Women of Distinction Award committee, we would like to personally extend our thanks to our administrator, Laurie Kalnin, and the outstanding committee we had. With their support, hard work and time, they all made the event possible. The success of WODA is a tribute to what great committees are all about. We would also like to pay special thanks to the past presidents of NAWBO – Southern Nevada for their efforts in selecting all the finalists and honorees. We hope you enjoy the publication celebrating the Women of Distinction Awards and reflect on all of the accomplishments that have allowed us to "blossom through the years."

**Jennifer Parker-Atherton**  
Business Community Capital

**Kelli Bowling**  
Citibank, N.A.

**Women of Distinction Awards Co-Chairs**



**Kelli Bowling**

## From the Foundation President



**Laurie Kalnin**

When I started my small business in 1985, the two biggest challenges I faced were access to capital and bidding opportunities. Here we are, 23 years later, and small, women-owned businesses are still listing these as their top two obstacles in starting and expanding their businesses.

National Association of Women's Business Owners (NAWBO) – Southern Nevada recognized these issues. In 2006, NAWBO – Southern Nevada board of directors decided to form the Women of Distinction Foundation, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The goals of the foundation are:

- To foster, recognize and honor those women whose have succeeded in achieving both their personal and professional goals
- To create a microloan fund program to assist women business owners access to capital

The funds raised each year from the Women of Distinction Award event will be the main source of funding for the microloan fund program. A licensed financial institution would manage the funds. The foundation will be able to make loans from \$500 up

to \$5,000 to start. As the fund grows, we hope to increase the loan amount to as much as \$10,000. This amount may seem small to some, but in many cases, it can be an obstacle for businesses, especially a very small, micro business. A micro enterprise is a business with fewer than five employees with needs for very small capital — less than \$35,000 — for startup and/or expansion.

There are 215,000 small businesses in the state of Nevada and 195,353 are micro businesses, according to data compiled by the Association for Enterprise Opportunity. Women own 58 percent of these.

Working with NAWBO – Southern Nevada, the WOD Foundation is committed to providing its members the best possible tools and resources available to assist small, women-owned businesses to develop and prosper.

**Laurie Kalnin**  
Financial Access Consulting  
**Women of Distinction Foundation President**



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## Committee List

Jennifer Parker-Atherton

Kelli Bowling

Laurie Kalnin

Laurie Travis

Jan Cosby

Bonnie Rosselli

Audrey Dempsey

Carol Skerlich

Karen Scherer

Denise Gustafson

Renata Follmann

Michelle Littleton

**"The future belongs to those who believe  
in the beauty of their dreams."**

Eleanor Roosevelt

## Adriana Arévalo

**A** Colombian journalist with 14 years in mass media experience, Adriana Arévalo began her career in Bogotá as chief correspondent for NTC, RCN news and CBS television news before coming to the United States. In 2002, Arévalo joined the Univision Network as a reporter and news department producer. Within four years, she was a news anchor; in July 2006, she was named Las Vegas news director.

Arévalo's work at the Spanish Univision Network has not gone unnoticed in American markets where the fight for audiences continues. Bilingual audiences, that until now have preferred newscasts in English, have noticed the improvements Arévalo has made and are choosing to stay informed in Spanish.

Since her arrival at Noticias 15, she directed the primary elections for which she interviewed Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign, congressional candidates and former President Jimmy Carter. For the Nevada caucus, she directed and interviewed Senators Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards and Chris Dodd as well as Gov. Bill Richardson. Just two hours before the caucus began, she moderated the historic Clinton/Obama live, in-studio broadcast, where Hispanic viewers called in with questions.

At 33, Arévalo is challenged to keep Hispanic audiences engaged, but with her extensive mass media experience, she is equal to the job. Arévalo is married, and her husband, son and newborn daughter are her most staunch supporters. 🌹



**Honoree**

## Muriel Stevens

**M**uriel Stevens, the Greenspun Media Group's restaurant critic, is also a former food editor and columnist for the Las Vegas Sun. Cooking and writing are her passion. She studied at select culinary schools and traveled extensively in pursuit of fine-dining experiences to share with readers.



**Finalist**

Stevens has written many articles on food, wine and travel for Las Vegas Magazine, Alaska Airlines magazine, Hemisphere and Town & Country. For many years, she was the editor of the Las Vegas Zagat restaurant survey and a contributor to the annual Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas. During her career, she garnered many honors including the first Woman of Achievement Award from the Nevada chapter of American Women in Radio and Television. 🌹



## Holly L. Silvestri

**P**rincipal and founder of public relations firm, impress communications, Holly L. Silvestri creates and oversees public relations campaigns, client relations, media relations and business development. A member of the Public Relations Society of America, in 2007 she was named a 40 Under 40 business executive by In Business

Las Vegas. She also was named to the first UNLV marketing department executive advisory board, is a past board member of the Las Vegas Advertising Federation and supports the Red Cross, Alzheimer's Association and Help of Southern Nevada. Silvestri is a member of the North Las Vegas and Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, NAWBO and the National Association of Female Executives. 🌹



**Finalist**



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## Katrina Ferry

**K**atrina Ferry is president of Alternative Management, an association management firm serving Nevada nonprofit organizations. Ferry's career began in 1985 with Management Development Associates in Reno. There, she



**Honoree**

was responsible for book-keeping and computer operations for the Reno Philharmonic, Young Audiences of Northern Nevada, Junior Achievement and the Sierra Arts Foundation. In 1990, after moving to Southern Nevada, Ferry began work with the Southern Nevada chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties and also estab-



lished her business, Alternative Management, a business that provides management services, special events planning, organizational review and goal setting for nonprofit associations.

Ferry was honored with the NAIOP chapter Merit Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Chapter

Executive in 1996 and served on the board of Through the Eyes of a Child Foundation. She also volunteers for Junior Achievement. 🌹

**"So what do we do? Anything. Something. So long as we just don't sit there. If we screw it up, start over. Try something else. If we wait until we've satisfied all the uncertainties, it may be too late."**

Lee Iacocca

## Audrey Dempsey

**A**udrey Dempsey founded Infinity Photo in 1996 with a photo shoot of Versace in the Nevada desert. Her Wedding & Portrait Photographers International award-winning photographs have been published in Newsweek, Vanity Fair, Nevada Woman,



**Finalist**

RangeFinder and Wine Spectator magazines. Dempsey has created images for Elton John's/Caesars Palace Web site and contributed to the Las Vegas premier celebrity-chef cookbook, Reservations Required. Her clients include Saks Fifth Avenue, Stirling Club, Culinary Union, Harrah's, United Brotherhood of Carpenters Union, Diva Studio, Las Vegas Odyssey, McCarran Airport, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and many more. She volunteers with many nonprofit organizations and is an active member of NAWBO. 🌹



## Debra Alexandre

**D**ebra Alexandre is senior vice president of the Nevada State Development Corporation (NSDC), Nevada's leading SBA lender. She has served in her present position for 15 years after a successful 17-year banking career. Alexandre assists small busi-



**Finalist**

nesses in Nevada to grow and prosper, ultimately creating new jobs. NSDC finances long-term

fixed assets, primarily real estate, for small businesses.

Alexandre was appointed to the Nevada District Export Council. Her role on the council is to assist small-business exporters of U.S. goods and services, again with the underlying focus of creating jobs. Alexandre is a member of the National Association of Development Companies, valley chambers of commerce and The Nevada Development Authority. She is involved in numerous civic and charitable organizations. 🌹



*Congratulations to all the Women of Distinction award finalists*

Nevada Power is proud to be a corporate sponsor of NAWBO-Southern Nevada, and proud to help them empower women to be the change they wish to see in our world.

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**“As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”**

Marianne Williamson

## Dr. Mable Smith

**M**able Smith, RN, J.D., Ph.D., dean and professor of the University of Southern Nevada College of Nursing, is a dynamic, yet unassuming, multi-functional leader who is dedicated to her profession, her community and her family. She served as a major in the Air Force Reserve, worked as a practicing attorney and established the college of nursing for the University of Southern Nevada. Under her guidance, the nursing college's enrollment has grown 240 percent.

Smith has recruited and hired a faculty of 15 of the nation's top nursing educators at a time when other regional colleges face difficulty in recruiting qualified people. She stepped forward to support the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life with a team of nurses who also proved to be top fundraisers. In addition, she supports SafeNest, Goodwill and other worthy causes.

Smith is active in the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition, helping to make a positive difference in the health care of our community. She is a graduate of Florida State University and Emory University with a B.S. and M.V. in nursing and a Ph.D. in education administration. She also has a J.D. degree with honors. 🌹



**Honoree**

## Dr. Renee Coffman

**R**enee Coffman, B.S., Pharm., Ph.D. is co-founder of the University of Southern Nevada and serves as the dean of its college of pharmacy, a school that has produced more



**Finalist**

than 400 graduates in the last five years. The school continues to grow and expand to meet community needs.

A licensed pharmacist in the state of Nevada, Coffman earned a pharmacy degree from Ohio Northern University and has worked in both hospital and community settings.



Coffman also earned a doctoral degree in industrial and physical pharmacy from Purdue University, where she received the Kienle Award for excellence in teaching, the Jen-

kins-Knevel Award for outstanding graduate research and was awarded an AAPE-AFPE Association fellowship in pharmaceutical sciences.

She is a member of many professional associations and Phi Kappa Phi and Rho Chi honor societies. 🌹

## Jan Cosby

**J**an Cosby is the executive MBA program manager for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas College of Business. She began a 20-year career in the hospitality industry



**Finalist**

working for the Marriott Corporation in hotel operations management. She then joined Walt Disney World in hotel operations, revenue management and human resources. Returning to school full time, she continued her career in human resources in the health care industry.



In 1999, she was hired as graduate programs coordinator for the William F. Harrah Hotel College at UNLV while completing her degree in sociology.

When the college of business instituted the executive MBA program, Cosby was recruited to manage the program as well as co-develop MBA career services.

Cosby is in the process of gaining her certification as a career management coach. 🌹

## Citi is proud to sponsor the Women of Distinction Awards.

Citi® would like to salute the Women of Distinction award recipients and the National Association of Women Business Owners for making our community a better place for all of us.

Kelli Bowling, CTP  
Vice President  
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kelli.r.bowling@citi.com



## Debbi Somers

**S**omers Furniture was established in March 1989 by Debbi Somers with initial focus on supplying rental furniture for the convention, hotel and casino industry. In the past 19 years, as the owner and CEO, Somers has enjoyed successes as well as faced challenges. "We have grown from our initial 10,000-square-foot rented warehouse with one employee, one rented truck and limited inventory to our present status," she said. Somers now owns a 57,000-square-foot warehouse, has a company-owned fleet of trucks and an inventory in excess of \$2 million. "We now employ 20 full- and part-time employees. Each of our three divisions has a female manager in charge," she added.



**Honoree**



Somers Furniture's latest projects have been the design, construction and installation of all furniture for the newest nightclubs in Las Vegas: the 40/40 Club at the Venetian and Trader Vic's at Miracle Mile in Planet Hollywood. Somers is grateful for her success and feels she has a responsibility to give back to the Las Vegas community. She supports Andre Agassi's Grand Slam for Children, Festival of Trees, Women Business Owners, Lili Claire Foundation and other deserving charities. 🌹

**"You may have your hands on the steering wheel, but the energy and creativity often come from your staff ... nourish them."**

Debbi Somers

## Kathy Gillespie

**K**athy Gillespie earned her B.S. degree in horticulture and landscape architecture from Purdue University and her MBA in transportation and distribution from Syracuse University. She was employed by Agway, a farmer-owned cooperative, for 19 years and later became director of Agway's seed division, where she was in charge of more than \$350 million in sales and 250 employees.



**Finalist**



To escape frigid New York winters, she moved to Las Vegas and purchased A & B Printing and Mailing in 1999. Sales were \$265,000 with six employees. Today, A & B Printing and Mailing employs over 40 employees and does over \$5 million in sales.

Gillespie has served as past WODA chair for two years as well as chairing various not-for-profit organizations. 🌹

## Pamela Washington

**P**amela Washington is the founder, president and CEO of A-1 Janitorial Services in Las Vegas. Since its establishment in 1993, the company has grown to its current size with more than 40 employees.

Under Washington's leadership, A-1 Janitorial has become one of the Las Vegas Valley's leading providers of commercial cleaning services. Her company provides custom, high-quality services for Las Vegas' A-list corporations and organizations and has worked with clients like Chevron, Dupont, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, the Howard Hughes Corporation, KLAS TV Channel 8, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, MGM MIRAGE, Nextel, Nellis Air Force Base, Station Casinos and others. She was named Enterprising Woman of the Year 2006 by Enterprising Woman magazine. 🌹



**Finalist**



**"How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heros and she-roes!"**

**– Maya Angelou**



MGM MIRAGE salutes our Diversity Champion, Catherine Siefert, Vice President of Hotel Operations at TI, as a nominee for the Rising Star Award.

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## Laurie Travis

Laurie Travis, recently hailed by RACKET Magazine in their November 2007 issue as “the moxie maven of swanky strip-side soirees,” has built her Las Vegas empire from the ground up. A balloon business based out of the back of a 1992 Dodge Caravan has evolved into



**Honoree**

LT Eventions, a multi-million dollar event-production facility with over 100 employees and a massive warehouse in which her signature events are created.

Travis takes pride in her portfolio of projects for Fortune 500 executives, high-profile social clients, celebrities, television networks, hotels and resorts, casino marketing events and her status as preferred vendor for decor and destination services for the largest gaming corporation in the world. Featured in RACKET, Event Solutions magazine, catersource Magazine, on HGTV's Design Star and in a new series for Lifetime Television, Travis



and her creative staff at LT Eventions have been recognized nationally for their fashion-forward event concepts. “Our success is in the collaborative efforts of our sales, design and production staff to exceed our clients’ expectations and perpetually reinvent our design product to keep in tune with current trends ... and sometimes start new ones,” said Travis, grateful for her staff of hand-picked industry experts

**“There are no mistakes in life.”**

Laurie Travis

and the wealth of special event resources available at her fingertips.

LT Eventions supports the community by including minority- and women-owned businesses. In an effort to share and give back to the community, LT Eventions donated \$1.5 million to nonprofit organizations in 2007. 🌸

## Darlene P. Williams

Darlene P. Williams is a native Nevada who began her career in the hospitality industry. At the Riviera Hotel, she honed her skills as a tour and travel director with a focus on the international market. In the 1990s, Williams branched out into the corporate and convention markets at the Desert Inn Resort & Casino, where her focus was developing partnerships in the southeastern part of the United States.



**Finalist**



Today, Williams continues to serve the hospitality industry with a more intimate and local agenda. As a catering manager at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino, she utilizes her years of experience to serve the community well

and attends to the needs of local business, charitable and civic groups. Her success is easily measured by repeat business and annual billings of more than \$1 million.

Williams’ contributions to the Las Vegas community extend beyond her service to the properties for which she has worked. With her extensive travel both in the United States and abroad with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, she represented not only her employers but the entire Las Vegas community. Williams is a past member of the Las Vegas Hospitality Association and Meeting Professionals International. In 2007, she earned the distinction of certified meeting professional.

Williams proudly volunteers her time to various organizations including Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Las Vegas, Girl Scouts of America, Frontier Council and Central Christian Church, Summerlin Campus. 🌸

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## Reina Herschdorfer

Reina Herschdorfer, executive director catering, convention services and events at Caesars Palace, started her career with Intercontinental Hotels in Hous-



**Finalist**

ton as the youngest



sales manager. Her career flourished and she moved to Boston where she held the position of catering and convention services director for the Westin Copley Place. After Boston, she relocated to Paris, France and became a member of the opening team for Disneyland Paris as director of convention services. After five years, she was promoted to director of sales and marketing for the UK convention and incentive market. She then returned to the United States and joined the Rio Hotel & Casino as the executive director of catering, convention and events. In 2006, she was promoted and transferred to Caesars Palace, another Harrah's Entertainment property.

She's a Florida International University graduate and speaks several languages. 🌸



## Susan Lydon

Silver State Bank's senior vice president/senior credit officer, Susan Lydon, has worked in the banking industry for 30 years, specializing in commercial lending. Her career started as a management trainee with a subsidiary of Western Bancorp. She progressed through



**Honoree**

the ranks to become a loan officer, branch manager, credit department manager and business banking officer. She was promoted to corporate loan officer and vice president in 1986.

Lydon joined Continental National Bank in 1988, where she was promoted to senior credit officer and senior vice president in 1989. Through its merger with First Security Bank, she worked as the bank's credit administrator, community reinvestment officer and business banking center manager. She has been with Silver State Bank since 2006, currently serving as senior credit officer and senior vice president.



Throughout her career, Lydon has been a mentor and teacher for loan officers and has trained hundreds in the art of commercial lending. She also teaches commercial lending through the continuing education department at UNLV.

Lydon supports her community with involvement in NAWBO, where she is public policy chair and sits on the membership committee and corporate sponsor committee. As a member of the Lions Clubs International since 1992, she has served as president of her club and participates at the district level as the Youth Exchange chair. She is also a member of the Make-a-Wish Foundation board of directors and serves on the loan review committee for Nevada Microenterprise Initiative. 🌹

**"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."**

Helen Keller

## Patricia Graves

Patricia Graves earned her degree in finance from The College of William and Mary and then began a career in banking where she completed management training at First Virginia Bank. She was



**Finalist**

soon promoted to assistant branch manager. A move overseas

followed with a job at Bank of America's U.S. military banking division as a branch manager, overseeing 50 employees and



two offices in Okinawa, Japan. Upon returning home, Graves left the branches to specialize in business banking as an underwriter for Wachovia Bank. She is now vice president and relationship manager in the Las Vegas commercial banking office for Bank of the West. There, she generates commercial loans, underwrites credit and manag-

es a loan portfolio. She was named to Bank of the West's Circle of Excellence for being the top relationship manager in the Central California/Nevada division for 2005.

Graves is a corporate sponsor representative in NAWBO and its community outreach committee and Care Bear program. She is a mentor at Clark High School's Academy of Finance, sat on the board of directors for Commercial Real Estate Women of Las Vegas and is active in her church. 🌹

## Julie M. Brutch

Julie M. Brutch has over 20 years of experience in Las Vegas banking and commercial finance. Currently, she is regional president for the recently opened Bank of George, and after helping es-



**Finalist**

tablish a market presence for the newly formed bank, will oversee the operational and lending functions of the Henderson regional office that is expected to open in 2008.

Prior to joining Bank of George, Brutch spent seven years with First National Bank of Nevada as a senior vice president, commercial lending team leader. She helped establish the commercial lending department in Las Vegas for First National Bank of Nevada when it opened in 2000. Under her direction and supervision, the loan portfolio grew from about \$2 million to \$185 million during her tenure.

Brutch provides superior customer service and originates and manages safe and sound loans. Her group supports business customers with a wealth of services and she was consistently one of the top commercial lenders company wide.

Brutch has a bachelor's degree in finance from UNLV and has worked in various capacities with Junior Achievement and the United Way of Southern Nevada program review and funding committee. 🌹

# Congratulations

2008 Women of Distinction Nominees,  
including our own

**Bonnie Rosselli**

a finalist in the

**Women of Distinction Award**

*Retail and Business Services Category*

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# Human Resources Training & Development

## Anna Siefert

Anna Siefert continued her business and economic development career by joining Nevada MicroEnterprise Initiative (NMI) in 1995 as a training facilitator and business technical advisor to her current position as operations manager/WBC project director. Prior to joining NMI, Siefert owned and managed two very successful businesses.



**Honoree**

Siefert brought to NMI more than 30 years of experience and knowledge in finance, banking and retail management, which enable her to assist the micro-business owners to overcome challenges. Since 1991, NMI has assisted more than 15,000 Nevadans through entrepreneurial training, technical assistance and microloan programs. In 2000, Siefert was awarded SBA's Financial Services Advocate of The Year award. 🌸



**"Do what you love, do what you believe in, do the right thing and your desired reward will be realized."**

Anna Siefert

## Fern Netzký

Fern Netzký, J.D., joined Orgill/Singer & Associates in 2002 and serves as in-house counsel and a member of the management team. Netzký is responsible for all legal matters including contracting, licensing, regulatory compliance, risk management and human resources. For three years, she accepted the first place award on behalf of Orgill/Singer as the Best Place to Work by the Southern Nevada Human Resources Association, an award bestowed in recognition of the innovative human resource practices and programs implemented by Netzký that distinguish Orgill/Singer as an employer of choice. Netzký collects hats that are reflective of her many organizational roles including those of firefighter, coach, private eye, gardener, commando, cultural attaché, Viking, magician, bullfighter, witch, Wonder Woman, elf, court jester and fairy godmother.



**Finalist**

Admitted to the practice of law in 1978 in Illinois after five years in commercial law and litigation, she moved to Israel where she specialized in commercial and insurance law in government, corporate and law firm settings. Prior to joining Orgill/Singer, she served as general counsel to Israel's largest insurance brokerage where, in addition to her legal duties, she developed an international training program for managing medical malpractice risk in developing foreign markets.

Netzký holds a B.A. in English and education from the University of Illinois and a juris doctor with honors from Chicago-Kent College of Law. In addition, she holds a certificate in risk management from the American Society of Healthcare Risk Management. She is a member of the Association of Corporation Counsel of America, Society of Human Resource Management and the Southern Nevada Human Resources Association. 🌸



## Judy Irving

Judy Irving, MCC, is an executive and leadership coach, a corporate trainer, author and non-denominational minister. She works one-on-one with business leaders to bring out strengths, best talents and skills in order to create vision and goal attainment. Her mission is to assist in transforming life outlooks and providing the tools for change. Irving began her company, Moving On, in 1996 and is ranked by ICF statistics as one of the top 2 percent of coaches with more than 10 years of experience in the country. Her clients range from Fortune 500 companies to the small-business professional.



**Finalist**

Irving is a member of NAWBO and is serving her fourth year on the board. She is also a member of the Nevada Professional Coaches Association, where she is a past president, and is currently serving as ethics chair. Irving is also past vice president of hospitality in the Las Vegas chapter of the American Marketing Association. She is on faculty at Coach Inc., the oldest coach-training school in the nation, and works closely with the International Coach Federation (ICF).

Irving gives back to the community in many ways. For four years she led a spiritual support group at the Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center in North Las Vegas. She is active in her church as an associate minister, is currently co-chair of the 2008 Citizens of Distinction awards (a benefit for the Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow) and has volunteered her services for the Leadership Las Vegas program every year since her graduation in 2004.

Irving's book, "Faith Lessons: Experiencing the Miracles" will be in bookstores in 2008. 🌸





"You will find as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love."

Henry Drummond

## Kathleen Boutin

For more than a decade, Kathleen Boutin has worked in community and government relations. She was first at the helm of the community relations committee for G.E. Capital and spent five years at the Clark County Health District overseeing volunteer services where she honed her skills in public, media, volunteer and donor relations. Boutin is an expert fundraiser and grant writer. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in business management and is certified in nonprofit management and public speaking. She's a 2003 Henderson Chamber of Commerce leadership program graduate and currently volunteers her time by serving on the advisory board for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Henderson. She is also the past treasurer of the Arts Council of Henderson and served a two-year term in an appointed position on the committee on homelessness. For two years, she was chair of the Nevada Homeless Alliance.

Boutin is a life-long Henderson resident, so she understands



the needs of the people for whom she advocates. Over the years, she has worked tirelessly on political issues that are close to her heart. She is a registered Nevada lobbyist, which has afforded her the opportunity to work on many social and community issues that have helped make Southern Nevada a better place to live.

Recently, she was reappointed to a five-year term to the citizens advisory committee for the city of Henderson. She is the recipient of the 2001 Nevada Women's Role Model award, has been

featured in the Chronicle of Philanthropy, and more recently, Family Circle magazine.

Boutin enjoys road trips to southern Utah and the central coast of California in her free time. 🌸

## Dianne Fontes

Dianne Fontes is the president of the Nevada Minority Business Council (NMBC), a nonprofit organization and one of 39 affiliates of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) chartered as a private sector initiative.

It was founded for the sole purpose of increasing the purchase of goods and services between minority suppliers and the private and public sectors. When she was hired in June 1994, the NMBC was in total disarray. Membership had dropped, there were no established programs, corporations (particularly hotels) were not participating and they had lost their NMSDC affiliation. In her first six months, Fontes turned the organization around by retooling the board of directors, creating and implementing a goodwill



public relations campaign and getting reaffiliated with NMSDC. By the end of her first year, she single-handedly introduced supplier diversity to the Las Vegas Strip starting with Caesars Palace, the first Strip property to embrace the program. Today, nearly every major Strip property and corporation participates in NMSDC.

In 1997, she was named SBA's Minority Small Business Advocate of Region IX, the state's first regional winner in more than 10 years. Honored for overcoming enormous odds in spite of tremendous resistance, she transformed the council into one of the most respected organizations in Nevada.

Today, NMBC has a staff of five and a

5,000-square-foot center for training and seminars. This year, Fontes opened a Reno office and continues to lead NMBC into one of the fastest-growing and most important organizations in the state. 🌸

## Ann McGee

Ann McGee is the founder and national president of Miracle Flights for Kids and has spent her life improving the quality of life for sick children and their families. McGee has spent the last two decades

dedicated to improving access to health care for kids who suffer from debilitating or life-threatening diseases. Many are babies, some only days old, but all need urgent medical attention to give them a chance at life.

McGee believes that a healthy life is every child's birthright, and she encourages parents to seek specialists and get second, even third, opinions. By giving children access to the best and brightest doctors, she lengthens and improves their quality of life.

More than 22 years ago, McGee recognized the need for aviation services that



would provide no-cost transportation for blood and donor organs as well as patients, flying them to medical facilities around the country. McGee started a grassroots program called Miracle Flights for Kids, a service that was created to provide financially-strapped families of sick children with free flights to hospitals and treatment centers. Through hard work and dedication, the program grew from a handful of local flights to a nationwide effort. To date, the program has completed more than 50,000 flights and provided over 25 million miles of free health care access to families in need. These miracle missions manifest McGee's belief that lack of money should never impede a child's access to the best possible medical treatment, no matter how far away or how often. 🌸

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## Diane Pollard

As president of Rainbow Professional Services Corp., a medical billing company, and marketing director of Rainbow Medical Centers, Diane Pollard is dedicated to children, scholarship programs, cultural



**Honoree**

and community events, women's organizations and health education

programs.

Highly successful in business, Pollard and her husband, Dr. Anthony Pollard,



started Rainbow Medical Centers more than 19 years ago.

Pollard is the epitome of a proactive community leader and activist and one who is dedicated to her community and its future. She initiated the Art for Education program that provides scholarships for disadvantaged youth. She has organized seven Las Vegas Juneteenth Festivals; is a member of The Links, Incorporated; Trumpet Awards Foundation; The Urban Chamber of Commerce; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; Boys and Girls Club

of Henderson and Summer Camp Fund. Pollard helped to establish The Afterschool Academy and is involved in creating Rainbow Dreams Academy, a charter school for at-risk students grades K-5. The academy will provide students with an academic curriculum that will prepare them to succeed in life and become productive members of society. 🌹

**"The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it."**

John Riskin



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## Dianna C. Russo

Dianna C. Russo is the managing partner of Houldsworth, Russo & Co., a progressive, entrepreneurial firm that provides accounting services to small-business and nonprofit clients. Her philosophy



**Finalist**

is to provide small businesses with the necessary tools to grow and succeed. Her goal is to reduce trouble areas and increase successful results.

Russo is well-known in the community as a leader and specialist in providing accounting assistance to small-business and nonprofit organizations. She provides expertise on how a business should be run so that clients can efficiently focus on day-to-day activities and the growth of their business.

Russo functions as a valued team member. In fact, her nonprofit practice consists of more than 100 organizations. Her extensive knowledge in the area has made her a sought-after educator and speaker nationwide. She has been a featured speaker



for the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants national conference, the Association of Fundraising Professionals and the Non-Profit Services Association. Additionally, she instructs classes for the UNLV/United Way

Non-Profit Management Certification Program.

Russo is a 1992 graduate of the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. She is licensed in Nevada and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Nevada Society of Certified Public Accountants. Russo has received the U.S. Small Business Administration's Accountant Advocate of the Year Award in the state of Nevada for her work with small businesses and nonprofits. She also received the Rising Star Award from In Business Las Vegas. 🌹

## Dr. Randa Bascharon

Randa Bascharon, D.O. brings a comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach to sports science and orthopedic surgery. Bascharon is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who is fellowship trained in sports



**Finalist**

medicine. She completed her medical training and orthopedic residency in Chicago, where she worked at several prominent institutions such as Northwestern University, University of Chicago and Christ Memorial Hospital. She then traveled across the country to Lake Tahoe to complete her orthopedic sports medicine fellowship, after which she had a solo practice in Lake Tahoe and Northern Nevada. Recently, she relocated to Las Vegas.



Her interest in sports medicine began in college where she was an athletic trainer at the University of Illinois. She is a board-certified athletic trainer and sports-performance specialist with a special interest in women's

health issues.

Bascharon has interacted with some of the world's experts in sports-performance enhancement, training, sports science and research. She has treated Olympic, professional, elite and amateur athletes of all ages and has been the orthopedic surgeon for competitive athletes for an extensive list of sporting events around the country. 🌹

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## Lorrinda Gray-Davis

**L**orrinda Gray-Davis, director of diversity for Perini Building Company, is responsible for creating and overseeing company policies that increase employment opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses (MBE/WBE) on Perini's



**Honoree**

construction projects. Current construction projects with aggressive diversity initiatives include MGM MIRAGE's CityCenter and the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel owned by the city of Phoenix.

Gray-Davis oversees Perini's diversity-development staff and is responsible for recruiting qualified MBE/WBEs, organizing seminars on Perini's client work requirements, building alliances with MBE/WBE organizations and overseeing company-wide participation. Gray-Davis also oversees and assists MBE/WBEs with Perini's qualification and application process.

To ensure the success of qualified firms, Gray-Davis helped develop strategies, including a mentoring program that partners Perini's key subcontractors with less-experienced firms. Perini also hosts classes for subcontractors who want to work on Perini's complex, fast-paced construction projects.

In 2007, Gray-Davis was awarded the Azteca Award for her inclusion efforts by the United States Hispanic Contractors Association. She was named



by the Arizona Minority Business Enterprise Center as minority advocate of the year and by Perini as corporate advocate of the year. She was named minority advocate of the year by the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce and was a finalist for the Women of Distinction award from NAWBO. The Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council Inc. (GCMSDC) recognized Gray-Davis for Perini's diversity initiatives by naming her the 2005 corporate advocate of the year. Gray-Davis received the award for her outreach efforts in support of minority-owned businesses and commitment to identify, educate and utilize minority business suppliers to work with Perini.

Gray-Davis chairs the board of directors for the Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council and is board secretary for the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. She also serves on the board of directors for the Women's Business Enterprise Council and the Associated Minority Contractors of America. In 2004, she was appointed to Arizona's Equity in State Contracting Commission. 🌸

**"Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires ... courage."**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Leslie G. Parraguirre

**T**he premier Las Vegas-based boutique design firm, Colours Inc., offers unique and exciting design concepts. Under the leadership of lifelong Las Vegas, Leslie G. Parraguirre, Colours Inc. has built a solid reputation as one of Nevada's finest and most prestigious interior design firms, recognized for award-winning model home merchandising, innovative retail store and professional office design and spectacular



**Finalist**

custom homes. Parraguirre graduated from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, earning a F.I.D.E.R. accredited degree and enjoyed a successful career with a nationally-recognized design firm. In 1988, she founded Colours Inc. which, today, is a 10-member firm comprised of outstanding creative talent and business administrators.

Parraguirre has won numerous awards for outstanding interior design and has been featured in trade magazines. She has been included in the book of Distinguished Women of Southern Nevada and was awarded the Moms In Business Network's Create Your Dreams award in 2006.

Parraguirre is active in many organizations and often offers her services on a pro bono basis. She is on the board of the Clark County Public Education Foundation and sits on the Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) interior design advisory committee. 🌸

## Cathy McBride

**A** trip from Kansas to Las Vegas for an 18-month Venetian Resort project turned into 10 years and the opening of Cathy McBride's own business, M-Truss & Components LLC, a designer, engineer and fabricator of cold-formed steel truss and wall panels. Her first three months were spent on The Venetian jobsite, but it was just a start. Since then, she's worked on the Las Vegas Regional Justice Center, Neonopolis, Stewart Street parking garage, a number of schools and numerous tenant improvements as the office manager/junior project manager for a drywall company.



**Finalist**

McBride now counsels building inspectors, architects, engineers and contractors on how her company can save them time and money.

But earning a living didn't fulfill her need to help society. Consequently, she recruited M-Truss for the pilot program of Nevada Prison Industries, a program that allows minimum-security inmates to learn construction skills. Upon release, M-Truss provides references as well as hiring assistance. She has also worked with foster-care children as a CASA (court appointed special advocate) and for two years on the CASA Foundation board distributing funds for the special needs of kids in their care. For the past two years, she has served on the board for the National Association of Women in Construction. 🌸

**Congratulations!**



Julie Brutch

Bank of George celebrates one of its key ambassadors in great professional achievement and meaningful contribution to the Southern Nevada community.

**Julie Brutch**, Regional President of Bank of George, has been recognized as one of the three finalists for the Glass Ceiling Award from the National Association of Women Business Owners.



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## Tammy Starring

**T**ammy Starring is a “multi-preneur” who has owned several successful businesses. Her enthusiasm for business ventures makes for a diverse and interesting résumé. She’s owned and operated the largest private valet company in Nevada, a Quizno’s



**Honoree**

Classic Subs and a Juice Express smoothie concession in terminal D at McCarran International Airport. Starring’s Quizno’s concession has consistently been one of the most productive in the nation.

Her newest business venture is one that distributes and sells energy-saving products. Solar Comfort, a partner of Energy Star and the US Green Building Council, is a window technology product that is a radiant heat barrier. It addresses the energy loss and gain through windows and cuts cooling and heating costs by up to 40 percent, while still allowing clear visibility. She is also an authorized dealer for GESPER, which stands for green energy surge protector and energy reducer, a product that protects whole electrical



systems and saves money on electrical bills. Her customers are both commercial and residential.

As a graduate of McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La., Starring holds a master’s degree in health and physical education. A women’s basketball team member throughout her college years, she is passionate about most sports and her love for sports is almost equal

to her love for business ventures.

Starring is a member of WPO, NAWBO, AMAC, National Republican Congressional Committee and US-GBC. She is also DBE certified. She is a single mom with a daughter, Diman, who wants to be a business owner, and a son, Daman, who is determined to play college basketball. The family shares an appreciation for the outdoors and an enthusiasm for sports. 🌸

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

Philippians 4:13

## Marie Martorano

**A**s the marketing director for Southern Nevada’s most popular shopping mall, Galleria at Sunset, Marie Martorano not only serves as the mall’s primary advertising and public relations executive, but she is also heavily involved with the community.

Her efforts to build programs and partnerships with various community organi-

zations — the mall hosts more than 90 community group events each year — continue to build a sense of community that residents have come to expect from the Galle-



**Finalist**

ria, which is owned and managed by Forest City Enterprises.

Martorano came to Galleria at Sunset from General Growth Properties where she had nine years of experience in shopping center marketing. Combining past experience with Galleria’s existing relationships with the mall’s retailers, she has helped to maximize sales as well as oversee visual merchandising and media and community relations for the shopping center.

Martorano formerly served as an assistant marketing director for GGP/North-



ridge Fashion Center, marketing director for Fallbrook Center, and marketing director for Montclair Plaza. She has received company and industry recognition as well as recognition from organizations such as the International Council of Shopping Centers and the Southern California Marketing Director Association.

Martorano earned bachelor’s degrees in international business and marketing management with a minor in economics from California State University, Los Angeles. She has been a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers since 1998. 🌸

## Bonnie Rosselli

**I**n 2004, Bonnie Rosselli purchased the AlphaGraphics Las Vegas franchise — a design, direct marketing and printing company. As president and head of sales,



**Finalist**

she led her team to triple their revenue within two years. As a result of this outstanding performance, she was awarded the AlphaGraphics’ Rising Star award in 2005. In 2006 and 2007, she reached the elite Gold Circle, awarded to the top centers in the AlphaGraphics network.

Rosselli began her professional career after earning a bachelor’s and master’s degree in special education. After eight years as an educator, she moved onto a successful 14-year career in promotional sales and marketing in Houston, Denver and New York. In those competitive markets, she



was able to apply her creativity and intense customer focus to win accounts against more established competitors.

In the early 1990s, while accompanying her husband on assignments abroad, Rosselli leveraged her professional skills working with nonprofit organizations. For nine years, she led fundraising activities with Doctors Without Borders, Operation Smile and Paul Newman’s Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. Her energy, combined with her marketing skills, brought together executives, diplomats and community leaders to raise record fundraising dollars.

Rosselli, a NAWBO member since 2005, serves on the Sunrise Children’s Hospital Foundation board of directors. 🌸

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## Catherine Siefert

Catherine Siefert is the vice president of hotel operations at Treasure Island, a position she has held since October 2006. Siefert is responsible for yield rate management and overseeing all aspects of hotel operations including the spa and salon, the wedding chapel,



**Honoree**

guest relations, guest services training, front services, front office administration, room reservations, PBX, uniform room, housekeeping and the public area.

An accomplished hotelier with more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Siefert joined The Mirage in 1992 and has worked in several positions including project staff at The Mirage, ticket office cashier at both The Mirage and TI, and VIP services at TI, where she was named employee of the month in January 1998. Later that year, she was selected to join Bel-



agio's opening team as a concierge supervisor, and earned a series of promotions including executive slot host, director of the ticket office and showroom, director of hotel training and guest relations and director of guest services.

Siefert earned her Bachelor of Science in business management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is an active participant in the

MGM MIRAGE Voice Foundation, a lector at St. Francis of Assisi Church, UNLV hotel college guest speaker, participant in the UNLV executive series and the UNLV mentor programs. 🌸

**"You create your own luck. Luck is when preparation meets opportunity."**

William McBeath

## Courtney J. McFarland

Courtney J. McFarland, finance center manager and assistant vice president at Citibank, is a native Las Vegas. After the death of both her parents in 1986, she was raised by her grandmother. It was she who taught McFarland strength and independence.

As a child, she wanted to be a doctor and never thought she would find



**Finalist**

herself in banking. But that changed when a

neighbor, a Citibank employee, explained how her job improved people's lives. It was then, at 19, that she applied for a teller position at Citibank and found her calling.

Through dedication and hard work, she was promoted from teller to investment sales assistant, service officer, personal banker and finance center manager. McFarland also took part in the opening of a new financial center in Aliante by doing six months of pre-selling. In 2006, she was promoted to assistant vice president and in the following year she earned the highest Citibank honor, the Citistars Sales



Award, given to only the top 2 percent of Citibank employees in the entire country.

With almost six years at Citibank under her belt and a strong commitment to

help clients, McFarland strives to find solutions. Whether it's business financing, consumer financial planning or helping her employees become the best they can be, she goes above and beyond. She thinks the Citibank slogan, "Turning dreams into realities," best sums up what she does.

McFarland now attends UNLV where she is finishing the last few credits toward her bachelor's degree. Recently, she volunteered her time to support the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, training to be next year's treasurer. McFarland is engaged to be married and lives in the southwest part of the valley. During basketball season, you'll find her cheering for the Runnin' Rebels. 🌸

## Claudia Ramos-Aghajanian

Citibank business development officer, Claudia Ramos-Aghajanian, was born in El Salvador in 1972. In 1981, her family immigrated to the United States where she attended high school. After graduation, she enrolled at Los Angeles City College where she graduated summa cum laude with an Associates of Arts degree; she is currently completing her bachelor's degree in business.

Drawn to business, Ramos-Aghajanian began her career at Automated Transaction Services as a service rep and eventually was promoted to a trainer position.

When she left Automated Transaction Services, she transitioned into the sales field with United Merchant Services. There, she excelled in sales and for two years in a row earned the top sales person designation in the entire country.

Three years later, she accepted an offer to become a business banking officer at Citibank, which gave her the opportunity to work with business clients. Successful in that position, in 2007 she was promoted to business development officer where she continues to expand her knowledge and expertise.

Ramos-Aghajanian is an acquisition expert for mid-to large-size corporations and businesses and helps clients turn vision into reality.

Claudia was married in 2006 and lives in Henderson with her husband, Fred, and two dogs. 🌸



**Finalist**

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Harrah's Entertainment is proud to honor the contributions of dynamic women in the  
Las Vegas community. Congratulations to all of today's Women of Distinction award winners.

