

Main Line Chamber: Meet some powerful women in our back yard

There is a great line in a recent *Newsweek* column that talks about the new sort of women who are making a difference in the world. The author, Kathleen Parker, reflects on the early days of the feminist movement and the changes that have been made over the past decade. Parker's wise observations are part of a *Newsweek* edition meant to recognize "150 Women Who Shake the World." The featured lineup of powerful women is impressive, from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to singer Shakira, who opened six schools in her homeland of Colombia and is expanding to South Africa and Haiti, to Oprah Winfrey, one of the world's most powerful media moguls.

"They are heads of state and heads of households," *Newsweek* said of powerful women. "With a fiery new energy, women are building schools. Starting businesses. Fighting corruption. Harnessing new technologies and breaking down old prejudices."

The *Newsweek* edition came out the same week that we at the Main Line Society of Professional Women (SPW) hosted our own gathering of powerful women. The spotlight at our luncheon meeting was on our guest speaker, Federal Judge Marjorie Rendell, but as I stood at the podium doing some

introductions I was struck by the collective power and potential in the room. There were women of every age and background, some just starting their careers, others shifting into a new venture and others leading major companies. We all enjoy reading magazine articles about the world's movers and shakers, but it's good to be reminded that there are women all around us doing amazing things every day.

I am fortunate to be a regional ambassador for Vision 2020, a campaign to make equality a national priority through shared leadership among women and men, which is an example of an amazing thing that is happening right in our back yard. Led by two extraordinary women, Lynn Yeakel and Rosemarie Greco, this national movement is headquartered right here in Philadelphia. Women from all over the country are creating action agendas to move America toward equality by 2020, the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment. You can join us on March 30 at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia for a free event celebrating women's past, present and future from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vision 2020 consists of current executives and female leaders brainstorming and sharing informa-

Taking Charge

Eileen Connolly-Robbins, founder of Society of Professional Women, Main Line Chamber of Commerce



tion with delegates throughout all 50 states to ensure that future generations have equal rights in the workplace and in society.

Leaders like Judge Rendell, who serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and just completed her duties as First Lady of Pennsylvania. She told our SPW crowd that early in her career when she was the only woman practicing bankruptcy law in Philadelphia, she decided not to mimic the tough, aggressive persona typical of many men in her profession. Instead she let her own brand of intelligence and good humor become her calling card.

"You need to surround yourself with people who

will encourage you to succeed," Judge Rendell said. She advised the women in the audience to identify a group of five friends and make a pact to reach out and support each other, whether with job advice or last-minute child-care help.

"We don't use our biggest resource, which is each other," she said.

Reading about the world's most influential women in *Newsweek* might make you think that some women are blessed with super powers that destine them for great success. But Rendell offered a realistic assessment of what's usually involved in achieving success.

"Life really is like a maze," she said. "You come up against a barrier and you find another way."

It helps to take the long view, too, she advised.

"It's a long life," she said, "and temporary setbacks can turn out to be opportunities."

On April 12 at the Radnor Hotel we will be hosting our very own regional "shaker," Rosemary Turner, president of UPS's Chesapeake District. Although she has clearly achieved greatness, Rosemary started her UPS career as a part-time clerk and worked her way up to president, shattering the glass ceiling in the process. Register early because all 2011 SPW events have sold out to date! Go to www.spwmainline.com for more information.