

## 40 Under Forty – 2005 WINNERS



**Beverlyn Grissom, Esq., 38**  
President-CEO  
Camden Shipping Corp.  
Bordentown, N.J.

Beverlyn Grissom made maritime history when she formed Camden Shipping, the first woman-owned maritime transportation company. She also was the first African-American woman to receive a certificate in maritime law from Tulane Law School in Louisiana. Her early days in the industry tried her faith. “[It] was the most painful experience of my life,” she recalls, “I literally thought I was living in some Black/female exploitation film from the 1930s. However, I am grateful now for having those experiences. The being told ‘no, you’re not entitled’ and ‘you’re not good enough’ is ultimately what motivated me to start the first company of its kind in the United States. ...God is really the CEO of Camden Shipping.”

Camden Shipping, where she is president and CEO, allows her to do her part to revitalize the city of Camden by using its port. “People of color are responsible for the restoration of our own communities,” she says.

Grissom holds a bachelor’s degree in business management from Rutgers University and a law degree from Tulane. She was an aide to the New Jersey Senate Education Committee and

helped obtain a provision in school construction legislation linking local municipal community development projects with new school construction. Her first entrepreneurial endeavor was AbbottLinks Inc., a consulting firm that helped school districts, universities, private preschool providers and construction companies implement a landmark State Supreme Court decision on overhauling urban education. She also cofound Horizon Pediatric Systems Inc., which offers comprehensive health care and early childhood education to medically disadvantaged children in Trenton, N.J.

Her grandfather fired her entrepreneurial spirit, although he was not formally educated, “[He] was a very successful entrepreneur. I saw the way that he lived his life and it inspired me to believe that I could do anything provided that I have a strategic plan,” she says. Her stint in government taught her the value of combining business acumen with political know-how, “Don’t argue with people when you know you are right. Don’t waste time seeking validation. Just do the thing and let your work speak for itself,” she likes to say.