

Women in Business – Two Thousand Six

IT HAS TAKEN GENERATIONS, CENTURIES EVEN, FOR SOCIETY TO BEGIN PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING a woman for all she is, was and will be. From the veritable morass of societal slavery, to contemporary struggles for more pervasive equality and respect, women have not only been forced to prove their strength time and again to those who don't deserve the dignity of proof, but also had to do so with a ferocious tide of opposition continually dashing them against the rocks every step of the way.

The irony is that even without such onerous history as a backdrop, the following ten women being honored by this magazine as the Top Women in Business in South Jersey would still be worthy of as much praise — although knowing the precedent makes their accomplishments that much more laudable. Their triumphs are without condition, their ascendancy unequivocal.

For this First Annual recognition, we reached out to several women's organizations throughout South Jersey, asking them to provide a list of female business leaders in the region they believed best personified the virtues of diligence and success, diversity of talent, and a philanthropic spirit intent on giving back to the community. National Association of Women Business Owners / South Jersey Chapter president Michelle Bunting, Women's President Organization / Princeton Chapter president Grace Polhemus, National Organization for Women / South Jersey Chapter president Jennifer Armiger and New Jersey Association of Women Business Owners president Gwen Faulkner each nominated several women they felt deserved the honor. After careful (and quite difficult) consideration, we narrowed the list to the ten most outstanding individuals.

What follows is a glimpse into each of these remarkable women's lives, illuminations on what gives them their drive, and ruminations on the potential for even further success in the future. In addition to owning and operating successful law firms, insurance companies, day care centers and much more, each of these women has also managed to make time for fostering successful family relationships.

The photos were taken on the charming grounds of Paulsdale in Mount Laurel, the birthplace and home of turn-of-the-century suffragist Alice Paul, whom each of these women recognized as a crucial soldier in the battle for women's equality. If what Harriet Beecher Stowe once said is true, and "women are the real architects of society" then South Jersey is a sturdy place to be indeed.



Name: Beverlyln Grissom

Business: Camden Shipping Corporation, Camden, NJ

Title: Chief Executive Officer **Age:** 39

About the business: Camden Shipping was formed to capture a small market share of the growing global maritime industry. The company focuses on marine construction, port operations and ship management. Its mission: to expand opportunities for women and minorities to participate in the maritime trade.

Why this woman? Camden Shipping is the first and only all-minority, female, marine corporation in the United States. Grissom can also lay claim to another distinction: she is the only woman in the United States who owns her own dredge.

In her own words: "This industry is all male. But this did not intimidate me; rather, it inspired me to form a company to compete in a global marketplace that has been a mystery to women for hundreds of years... American businesswomen operate from a position of strength as we enjoy the most comprehensive freedoms and protections in the world... If I could change something I would make the industry more diverse... I have made countless mistakes, but I am proud of each of them. Each time I have made a mistake was an opportunity for growth... Fear is an emotion. It is not a reality. Therefore I work every day to not embrace fear. It is a destructive emotion that arrests progress and one's ability to lead other people."