



DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

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DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY CELEBRATES NEW WAVE OF INNOVATING ENTREPRENEURS IN 2008 HONORS RECEPTION

The youth brigades of women entrepreneurs, those in the vigor of the twenties and thirties population cohorts, are transforming the face of women's entrepreneurship and of the American engine of commerce – marketing, production, and the novel 21st century cornucopias of goods and services. It is these women, only now emerging into a much deserved public notice, who are celebrated in Dialogue on Diversity's entrepreneurship programs for 2009 – and the Autumn 2008 Honors Reception, held October 3rd at La Tasca in Washington Penn Quarter arts and restaurant district, is the kick-off of this celebration of the 19 to 39 generations.



Dialogue on Diversity", notes its President, **Ma. Cristina Caballero**, "is an international network of women entrepreneurs dedicated to the advance of constructive dialogue among women -- and men -- of America's diverse ethnic and cultural communities. The key to effective entrepreneurship is the aggressive adoption of contemporary technology by the women founding business enterprises at record breaking rates in all corners of the country."

Photo:: Ma. Cristina.Caballero, Shelonda Stokes, Veronica Cool, Momyka Berrocosa, and Theresa Alvillar-Speake.

- A dominant theme in the Dialogued on Diversity's entrepreneurship programs continues to be the lure for small business of the diverse supply chains of large corporate purchasing behemoths and of the federal agencies of equally formidable bulk. The techniques women and ethnic entrepreneurs must employ to prepare themselves to compete in the stiff rivalry for the purchasing dollars, the process of gaining qualified rating from private- and public-sector organizations as the admission ticket to the competition, and the resourcefulness that enables fast turn-around times and innovative techniques as the owner's stock in trade – all this is the subject of seminars throughout the year.

Since 2001 Theresa Alvillar-Speake has championed the cause of diversity in the vast supply chains in the world of federal agencies, serving as Director of office of Economic Impact and Diversity at the Department of Energy. For a career's stellar accomplishments in the cause of supplier diversity the well-merited Global Diversity Award was conferred October 3rd, 2008 on Ms. Alvillar-Speake. An experienced entrepreneur herself, forging success out of formidable hardships in California's bracing business environment, she directly turned all energies to the project of mentoring and advocacy for her fellow entrepreneurs – a challenge that, in one or another of a variety of forms, has dominated her subsequent tireless course. Ms. Avillar-Speake first came into the public service

spotlight in her native California as a successful entrepreneur drawn into public service as the high achieving Director of a variety of State commissions.

Theresa Alvillar-Speake is now tasked with designing and propelling an effective supplier diversity system for a major federal entity, the U.S. Department of Energy -- an agency whose assignment in the American economic and public policy universe has now moved to the center of an anxious national concern, with the promise of undertakings to come in the near future of a historically innovative and quantitatively much expanded range in a society pressed for massively enhanced sources of energy. It is her goal, in the first instance, to convey persuasively to the Department, and specifically to its Secretary, the effect on minority communities of specific energy policies, and of the penumbra of programs and practices they engender. At the same time her job extends to the programs of the Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Utilization (called affectionately OSDBU among the Capital's policy wonks), and it is here that her continuing concern for the weal of the small entrepreneur is amplified through the leverage of a governmental department of the first rank in its powerful purchasing arm. The Department of Energy typically directs its budget -- of necessity -- toward large projects that can be practicably handed only by mega firms. Supplier diversity is characteristically effected at one remove, therefore, as the agency sets up a menu of prescribed diversity procurement practices as a condition of the arrangements it puts in place with the large firms that are its own direct contactors -- this being the mechanism that bringing a vigorous and focused supplier diversity régime roaring back into play.

- To those of us of a certain age, who perceive persons and events from the perspective of -- to state it delicately -- well seasoned observers, the advent of the new wave of craftsmen, intellectuals, and business leaders and entrepreneurs, those who have come on the scene as infants only in 1970 and into the active arenas of commerce and performance only with the decade of the 90s -- all marks a fresh, challenging, and at once profoundly encouraging entry to a new era. For the new cohorts of performers, among them the brave and creative women entrepreneurs of our own decade, the traditions and the techniques of the past are a jump-off point -- the task at hand, however, is the fashioning on those worn foundations of the new, often surprising, and generally praiseworthy structures that are coming to be the face of our contemporary society and economy -- for these new departures due recognition must be given. Dialogue on Diversity in the Honors Reception of October, 2008 and in its programs on tap for 2009 celebrates the youth invasion of our cultural space, one made at all points more piquant and productive by the spice of diverse culture and ethnicity in its most spirited exponents. The Honors evening October 3 was the auspicious beginning of the coming year's recognition of the worthy young. The season's honorees form a remarkable and impressive trio of achievement.

A small business banking officer with the Baltimore operations of Wachovia-- a banking system being folded momentarily ether into the vast reaches of Citibank or into the welcoming arms of Wells-Fargo, with apparent broadening of useful scope for the members of either of the proposed pairings -- VERONICA COOL, in her half dozen years in this post, reviews the financial state of affairs with a long train of entrepreneurs, displaying among them a significant range of business types and lines of activity, all seeking the financing that turns spirit, planning, and networks of clients and suppliers into the thriving reality of an actual enterprise. Mrs. Cool's vision of the contours of entrepreneurship in the ethnic communities and traditional mainstream as well, in the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan region, a microcosm of the country, is something of a kaleidoscopic picture of the dazzling variety of skills, styles, accents, and multifaceted economic thrust striving for expression in these communities. Her own skills have rapidly elevated her to first place among business banking officers in the nationwide Wachovia. She remarks that in spite of the financial discombobulations that are the stuff of current media reports, her contacts in the world of the small enterprise economy have been bringing forth business projects as sound and animated as ever and that the

supply of loanable funds at her desk is as plentiful and free flowing as ever.

Veronica Cool is a native of the Dominican Republic and serves now as officer and board member in several Hispanic (and other) civic and commercial organizations, among these, by appointment of the Governor, the Statewide Commission for Hispanic Affairs. She resides with her family in the Baltimore urban periphery. She holds a graduate degree in Finance from Loyola College of Maryland.

- A warrior against the digital divide, creator of the Ultimate Business Makeover (the reality show of the small entrepreneurs!) and Letz Kick It, a kids' health and fitness TV extravaganza, SHELONDA STOKES has recorded a history of signal achievements in a striking range of business, social, and human interest fields of concern. With a college degree in electrical engineering and fifteen years' work in a variety of posts



variously relating to the technologies of communication, to the design of films and media productions combining entertainment and an intense social cutting edge, Ms. Stokes has secured her place as a significant figure in forming the public mind on a range of essential social and economic questions. Her career began with a stint at Hewlett Packard, where her tasks centered on re-design of HP's Government Business Center facility and in responsibility for servicing a related multi-million federal account. For the ten years just past her own firm, GreiBO Media, has been a principal forum of action, the base from which she has not only made strides in fashioning innovative media creations, but has gained solid recognition in the metropolitan area as a force in business and community development. Her social concern has extended to the Associated Black Charities and to Bridging

the Gap projects in Greater Baltimore. An impressive resume evidences Ms. Stokes's acute intelligence and creativity, as she stands as an exemplary member of the youth cohort in American entrepreneurship. She appears for recognition in our 2008 Honors as an entrepreneur whose illustrious career is still in its ascendant.

- MONYKA BERROCOSA is the guiding spirit in a cluster of innovative cuisine viticulture enterprises. In completing a decade's work as critic, journalist, and educator on cuisine and wine in our metropolitan area, she readily recites, quite off the cuff, the details of terroir, growth, style, and taste characteristics of the obscurest growths in wine districts around the globe. While we would doubtless call her an expert in the recondite lore of sauces, vintages, and the like, she calls herself by the worthier title: "enthusiast". She travels widely in search of the best in the experience of food and drink, passing along the best of her findings to an eager audience of readers, viewers, and friends throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Her book, *One Sip at a Time* (published in 2006), countless articles, and frequent radio and television appearances carry the word to an attentive audience. Her business enterprise Grape Ventures LLC, a media firm working in a variety of modes, masterfully creates "Concepts with a Conscience" -- that is to say, notions touching our much favored cosmos of food and wine. A more recent venture is MyCity4Her, Inc. a vehicle for Ms. Berrocosa's presiding over a lively internet community of women entrepreneurs.



