

Elizabeth Nisbet Miller

THE NATIONAL WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS CORPORATION

2008 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



Elizabeth Miller has used her strong background in business-to-business sales and marketing to help advance the progress of every organization with which she has worked. From her role as founding director of First Trust Bank in 1999, to her appointment to the Business Expansion Funding Corporation, to her work as president of the Charlotte Women Business Owners Association and director of business development for Weichert, Realtors®-Rebhan & Associates, she has met all challenges head on and has left her fingerprint on each.

Now taking her relationship marketing skills to yet another level, Miller has, since 2001, been a site inspector for The National Women Business Owners Corporation, a not-for-profit organization that certifies woman-owned businesses for the purpose of competing for government and corporate contracts.

But even with all of this corporate success, Miller acknowledges that achieving true gratification can be difficult. "Many professionals, even business owners, don't find fulfillment in their day-to-day work," she says. "By working with nonprofits, people often will satisfy their need to participate in a way that might be different from what they're doing in their career."

In addition to Miller's corporate activities, she has helped raise the profile of nonprofit, trade and professional associations, as well as civic, cultural and educational institutions. Her community activities include participation on the advisory board of WDAV radio; and she has served on the board of trustees of Montreat College. She is a member of the Business Marketing Association Carolinas Chapter, a professional organization that promotes business-to-business marketing and career advancement.

Family Ties

The volunteer work closest to Miller's heart is one with family ties. She is the immediate past board chair of the Charlotte Museum of History and Hezekiah Alexander Homesite, which was built in 1774 and is Mecklenburg County's oldest surviving house. As a board member, she helps guide the museum in its community outreach and fundraising efforts.

"History was always emphasized in my family," says Miller, a Charlotte area native and a direct descendant of Alexander, a local blacksmith and planter. "My grandmother, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, was instrumental in saving the Hezekiah Alexander House from demolition in the '60s. I remember her taking me out there a lot as a child." (For information on The Charlotte Museum of History and Hezekiah Alexander Homesite, visit www.charlottesmuseum.org.)

Miller's community involvement reaches well into the business world. As president of the Charlotte Women Business Owners Association, she raised the visibility of that organization in 1999, by guiding its conversion into a chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners — the same organization that now honors her with the 2008 Community Service Award.

Empowering Women

As inspector for The National Women Business Owners Corporation, Miller continues to make a powerful impact on the effort to help woman-owned companies acquire the tools they need to succeed in the marketplace. "As more and more women start businesses," she says, "they find themselves in a unique position to really capitalize on that. Large corporations and government entities are making the most of this fast-growing market segment as suppliers."

Fast-growing it is. According to the Center for Women's Business Research, for the past

two decades, majority-woman-owned companies have continued to grow at nearly twice the rate of all companies, and account for 41 percent of all privately held firms. With those kinds of numbers, certification guaranteeing that a business is truly woman-owned has become an important factor in determining whether large corporations and government agencies will contract with particular companies based on their stated status as "woman-owned." **TCW**

Woman-Owned? Why It Matters

Elizabeth Miller, inspector for The National Women Business Owners Corporation, says becoming certified as a woman-owned business can open doors to successful partnerships in the marketplace. Check out *Capitalizing On Being Woman Owned*, by Janet W. Christy, president of Leverage & Development LLC, in Greer, S.C.