

Area businesswomen among top 25 honored

By SUSAN DeMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

Because women-owned businesses pump \$750 million into Michigan's economy, Gov. John Engler came to the Southfield Marriott on March 17 to honor Michigan's top 25 businesswomen.

Most of the businesses are based in southeast Michigan, including Southfield, Troy, Farmington Hills and Plymouth.

For the first time, the Greater Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) identified the state's top women business owners for an award based on revenue earned, company age and number of employees.

This year's nominees ran businesses that earned \$5 million in 1993, employing thousands of Michigan residents. The state boasts 134,000 women entrepreneurs who run auto dealerships, real estate firms and manufacturing and service companies.

Nationally, according to NAWBO director Chinyere Neale, 5.4-million women own businesses, employing more people than all the Fortune 500 companies combined.

"I'm really delighted to be able to honor these Michigan businesswomen for their success," Engler said before the awards banquet.

"Women have always been out there working in the world and with an organization like

"We all walk the same paths, have the same struggles and hopes and dreams. To succeed, you need good employees and friends around you and the empathy to put yourself in other people's places."

Erma Eller
Troy Ford dealer

"I do believe it's a cop-out to say a woman can't raise a family and work in the community as well," she said. "I see this award as a great honor to be recognized in the business world, especially in a field that has traditionally been a man's type of business. I attribute my success to having a very supportive husband as well as my desire to see progress and change managed to positive results."

Irma Elder, owner of the Troy Ford car dealership, said she accepted her award "on behalf of every single woman in the business world."

"We all walk the same paths, have the same struggles and hopes and dreams," she said. "To succeed, you need good employees and friends around you and the empathy to put yourself in other people's places."

Kathleen Dul Aznavorian, president of Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth, said the award was a "thrilling surprise."

"It's nice to be recognized in what has been, up to now, a man's world, and for golf, a traditionally man's business," she said.

Michigan's top 25 Business Women Owners of 1994 include entrepreneurs from these Observer & Eccentric area-based companies: Carol Quigley, president, Quigley Industries, Southfield; Marilyn Barnett, president, Mars Advertising, Southfield; Katherine Banicki, president, Testing and Engineering Consultants, Troy; Irma Elder, president, Troy Ford; Florine Mark, president, Weight Watchers Group, Farmington Hills; Christine Meyers, Laine Meyers Inc., Troy; Kathleen Dul Aznavorian, president, Fox Hills Country Club, Plymouth; Helen McKenna, McKenna Industries, Troy.

Others in the top 25 include: Joan Binkow, CEO, General Television Network, Oak Park; JoAnne Shaw, president, The Coffee Beanery, Flushing; Billie Jo Wanink, president, Interior Systems Contract Group, Royal Oak; Sharon Madison Polk, president, Madison International, Detroit; Gall Duncan-Campagne, president, Jerone Duncan Ford, Sterling Heights.

Lula Mullen, Wesley Industries, Flint; Chrystal Halley, ReMax 100 Inc., Novi; Alice Shatwell Gustafson, president, Hubert Distributors, Pontiac; Judith Kueway, president, Motor City Stamping, Chesterfield; Ruth Perry, president, Perry Personnel Plus, Sturgis; Jane Pierce, H & H Restaurants, Lansing.

Gretchen Bomer Cole, Detroit Air Compressor and Pump, Ferndale; Marian Ilitch of Little Caesar's of Detroit; Theresa Jones, president, Northwestern Dodge, Ferndale; Ann Wary, Business Resources, Inc., Ann Arbor; Dorothy Knuappenberg, Michigan Rivet, Warren; and Barbara Wilson, president, Ferndale Honda, Ferndale.

Katherine Banicki, president of Testing and Engineering Consultants, a Troy environmental testing company, said her nomination meant that "women can really have it all."

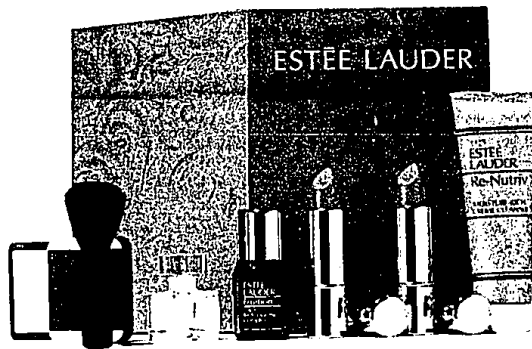


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Honoring women: Gov. John Engler talks with Katherine Banicki, a Bloomfield Hills resident who, as president of Testing and Engineering Consultants Inc., was honored among the state's top businesswomen.

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NAWBO, women can enjoy the same networking and bridge-building opportunities their male counterparts have enjoyed for centuries."

The 25 honorees were pinned with corsages. The evening was filled with hugs and handshakes. Christine Meyers, president of Laine Meyers, a Troy publishing representative firm, said her nomination was proof hard work and a good education still constitute a recipe for success.

"The woman's struggle in business has been long and difficult," she said. "But it's getting better everyday. The business world is changing. People are paying more attention to the family-side of their lives and it's a more caring, aware business community. I like to think women in business had something to do with this."

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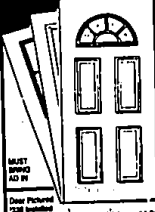
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