

Established Woman Awards



■ Lili Hall

KNOCK, Inc.

Business: KNOCK, inc is a full service retail design and branding agency. Started in 2001. 20 Employees, 8 full time contractors.

Lessons learned: So many. I am on chapter 457. The ones that stand out the most are: nip things in the bud. Go with your gut, you are usually right. Be upfront with what you expect from your staff.

Life motto or Quote to live by: My life motto is

where there is a will there is a way. I live by a few quotes. "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." *Thomas Edison*. "Never, never, give up" *Winston Churchill*.

Spare time/how do you relax: Drive my kids to their activities. Entertain friends. Listen to MPR in my car alone. And once a year I sit on a beach.



■ Patricia May

Precision Language Services

Business: Precision Language Services provides foreign language translation for documents, websites, and software. The company places on-site interpreters and has 24/7 interpreting service by telephone for 100 languages. Direct transcription/translation services are also available. Started in 1993. 34 employees.

First job: As a teenager I was an assistant for the school district's arts and crafts summer program.

That meant I had the privilege of sweeping up pieces of raffia and scrubbing glue off the tables while trying to keep children from using the copper hammers on each other.

Lessons learned: Sleep is not a necessity. Staff is the best investment a business owner can make. Choose them carefully, train them well, reward them fairly, appreciate them openly and they'll make the business succeed. Good business ethics start at the top. No one will be more honest, more fair, or more reliable than the top-ranking official in any company. Sometimes it's necessary to swallow hard, smile and say, "Yes, we can!" You can figure it out later.

Spare time/how do you relax: When not working, I spend time with my family, work on household projects, or exercise. Read. Get a massage. Go for a long walk.

Best business book and why? *Navigating the Badlands* by Mary O'Hara-Devereaux. Mary brings disparate observations about global events and economic conditions together, helping businesses interpret globalization so they can thrive in the next decades.

Anything else? No. Except that I love dark chocolate, coffee and my red Honda CRV.



■ Suzanne McGann

Voyageur I.T.

Business: Voyageur I.T. is an award-winning web site design and development company that offers strategic online branding services (site design/development), hosting, and additional web components such as email marketing and search engine marketing. Having been in business since 1996, we have helped build many successful businesses through the thoughtful use of online tools. A few recognizable clients include: GE Money, G&K Services, US Bank and Welsh Co. Company started in 1963. Seven full-time employees.

First job: Teaching piano lessons to neighborhood kids in [the DC Metro] Virginia. (I took it all very seriously with notebooks, curriculums, and reward stickers!)

Lessons learned: Sounds a bit cliché, but my greatest journeys (and therefore lessons) have been about "owning my power" in leadership. Not as a woman per se, but as a leader of a thriving small business.

Life motto or Quote to live by: "Have to believe you can before you can", Paul McGann [father-in-law, and past entrepreneur many times over]

Spare time/how do you relax: Spent going on adventures with my husband and two kids (son, 5; daughter 1). Lots of canoeing in the summer! To relax I love trashy "Us" magazines on an occasional Friday night veg-session.

Best business book and why? Colleagues at the Bailey Group have written a great gem: "Grown-Up Leadership: The Benefits of Personal Growth for You and Your Team". Highly recommended.



■ Kathryn Sloper

Johnson, West & Co., PLC

Business: Johnson, West & Co., PLC is a Certified Public Accounting firm located downtown St. Paul. The company began during the 1960's. I purchased my ownership percentage during 1997. Five Partners, 23 Employees.

First job: Sewing winter coat linings at a factory in Wisconsin, during high school. Before joining Johnson, West I was an assistant controller with Sibley Catalog Showrooms.

Lessons learned: To be adaptable, going with the flow. I strive to listen effectively and learn from others.

Life motto or Quote to live by: I live by the theory that no one can be expected to, or will ever, know everything. To succeed you need to surround yourself with intelligent and talented people.

Spare time/how do you relax: I head to my lake home in Wisconsin and relax on my pontoon. I also enjoy vegetable gardening and preserving/canning the produce from my garden.

Best business book and why? I enjoyed reading Spencer Johnson, MD's book "Who Moved My Cheese". The book gives insight about finding happiness and success by being willing and open to change. This applies to a person's personal and business life. The accounting and tax rules are forever changing with new legislation and regulations. These changes constantly challenge our clients, our business and our personnel.

Anything else? When I joined Johnson, West as a bookkeeper, I expected to be happy in that position for the rest of my life. Times changed and I grew and wanted more, moving on to be the firm's first woman staff accountant and now the firm's first woman partner.

