

Professionals Gather for the Ohio Diversity and Leadership Conference



Professionals from across Ohio convened in Columbus for the 4th Annual Ohio Diversity & Leadership Conference, September 8 & 9, 2011. Attendees had the opportunity to network, grow, and learn in an environment of leaders devoted to promoting diversity in their fields. This year's conference theme was "DiversityFIRST™: Creating New Opportunities for Your Community". The conference was held at the Hyatt Regency Columbus, 350 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215. Co-title sponsors are Nationwide Insurance and Premier Health Partners.

This marks Nationwide's fourth year as sponsor of the conference. "This year's conference is timely and relevant as organizations are being more diligent in finding ways to support their associates as well as the communities where they do business," said Candice Barnhardt, Chief Diversity Officer for Nationwide Insurance. "It is important to create an environment where people can achieve their dreams and make sure that all voices are heard and valued in the workplace and in our communities "Nationwide believes that inclusion creates innovation and innovation creates opportunity for all".

"Premier Health Partners is proud to be a sponsor of

this year's conference," said Lisa Smith, Director of Diversity. "As Dayton, Ohio's largest employer, our workforce is comprised of a diverse group of individuals. It is critical that we learn to respect differences and embrace diversity of thought and ideas. The high caliber speakers at this year's conference presented excellent information about inclusion that up and coming leaders will benefit from," she added.

Dennis Kennedy, Founder and CEO of the National Diversity Council, further states, "The Ohio Diversity and Leadership conference presents a tremendous opportunity for the state of Ohio to improve its community, by educating leaders on the importance of diversity and inclusion best practices."

The conference consisted of over a dozen sessions dedicated to diversity and leadership, along with nationally known, keynote speakers such as Donna Brazile, Dee Dee Meyers, Douglas Blackmon, and Lani Guinier.

Awards were also presented for Most Powerful and Influential Women of Ohio, Multicultural Leadership, DiversityFIRST™, and Legal Diversity Champion.

Award Winners

Ohio Most Powerful and Influential Women



Yvette McGee Brown, Ohio Supreme Court
Mary Navarro, Huntington Bank
Charleta B Tavares, Ohio Senate, 15th District
Dr Barbara Gellman- Danley, University of Rio Grande/ Rio Grande Community College
Barbara Johnson, Miami Valley Hospital
Rita Rice Morris, Shawnee State University
Margaret Hewitt University Hospital
Kathy Krendl, Otterbein College
Connie Woodburn, Cardinal Health
Robin Everhart, Cintas Corporation
Dr. Karen E. Rafinski, Clark State Community College
Amy Shore, Nationwide Insurance
Liz Digiandomenico, Luxottica Vision Care Services
Tara Abraham, Accel inc
Eleanor Biddulph, Progressive Medical

Ohio Multicultural Leadership



Kimberly Blackwell, PMM Agency
David Arango, Titan Insurance Company / Nationwide Insurance
Barron Witherspoon, Procter & Gamble
Jamie Phillips, Nationwide Children's Hospital