

7th Annual Gulf Coast Women in Leadership Symposium



Panelists from left to right: Paula McHam, Pam Gardner, Vi Phu, Elizabeth Campbell, Meera Naehr, April Bailey and Shannon E. Grossman

The 7th Annual Gulf Coast Women in Leadership Symposium was held in Houston, TX at the University of Houston Hilton on Thursday, March 8, 2012. A diverse group of leaders from numerous organizations in the Gulf Coast area attended the symposium, which addressed topics relevant to women in leadership. This year's symposium presented the theme of "Women Leaders as Architects of Change."

The event opened with an opportunity for the attendees to grab breakfast and network with each other. Organizations and businesses were also able to set up a booth where they could share information about their work with other attendees. This early morning meet-and-greet was held as an opportunity to create connections and contacts, establish a network of fellow business leaders, and foster a sense of community and support throughout the fields of work that were represented.

After registration and networking,

the symposium began. A group of successful and influential women from some of the top companies in the Gulf Coast area comprised a panel created to discuss topics related to women leaders' success in the workforce today. The moderator, Paula McHam of Cigna, gave introductions of the panelists and topics. The panelists included Shannon E. Grossman, Director – Supply Chain Management, Global Procurement and Systems of Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation, Elizabeth Campbell, Partner and Chief Diversity Officer of Andrews Kurth LLP, Pam Gardner, Special Assistant to the Owner of the Houston Astros, April Bailey, Vice President of Middle Market Banking of Amegy Bank, N.A., Meera Naehr, President of Mom Corps Houston, and Vi Phu, Principal and Actuary of Mercer Health and Benefits Consulting. Topics of discussion included "Becoming a Person of Influence," "Cross-Cultural Leadership: Women Bridging the Racial Divide," "The 'M' Factor in Mentoring for Leadership and

Success," "I'm a Woman. I'm Invincible...and I'm Exhausted! (Work-Life Balance)," "Personal Branding: Accessorizing Your Assets," and "Own Your Finances, Own Your Life."

The aim of this year's discussion was to provide a forum to hear other women's stories, their experiences, how they overcame challenges, and where they are today regarding leadership, work/life balance, and mentoring as well as tips and tricks regarding personal finance and personal branding.