

Professional Women are inspired at the 4th Annual Illinois Women's Conference



2013 Most Powerful & Influential Women of the Illinois Women's Conference

Approximately 300 women attended Illinois Diversity Council's 4th Annual Women's Conference on April 24th at the Double Tree by Hilton. The conference theme, "When Women Succeed, America Succeeds" focused on challenges women in leadership positions have overcome and opportunities they've gained in order to become successful.

"This event gave women an opportunity to grow, develop, learn, and network with women in executive positions," Dennis Kennedy said, Founder and CEO of the National Diversity Council. "The Illinois Women's Conference created an environment where the attendees could learn essential skills to excel in their respective organizations."

At this year's conference, Pat Harris, Global Chief Diversity Officer of McDonald's, was honored with the "Woman of the Year Award." With a background in human resources, Harris became an expert in

the field of diversity and inclusion. Today, Harris leads the McDonald's Corporation. She develops and implements diversity strategies throughout 33,500 restaurants in 119 countries. During her tenure, McDonald's has earned recognition for its diversity and inclusion efforts from major publications like Black Enterprise Magazine, Latina Style Magazine, Asian Enterprise Magazine, and Worklife Matters Magazine.

In addition to Pat Harris, 17 women in executive positions were honored with "The Most Powerful and Influential Women Award" for their leadership excellence and for sustaining a record of accomplishments and contributions to their field of work throughout the scope of their career.

Following the awards recognitions, the attendees took part in three concurrent sessions which consisted of several topics, chosen to focus on

their professional development.

Former governor of Michigan, Jennifer Granholm was the conference keynote speaker. Gov. Granholm is currently a distinguished practitioner of Law and Public Policy at the University of California, Berkely. In her speech, she admonished the women in attendance to challenge the norm of men holding top leadership positions. Gov. Granholm's insight and experience perfectly accentuated the conference's theme.

The Illinois Diversity Council would like to thank all of the speakers, sponsors, volunteers, and attendees for helping make the Illinois Women's Conference a success.



Dennis Kennedy and the Woman of the Year, Pat Harris