

2023 INNOVATION AWARDS

Honoring the Women Making Change in our Region



Women leaders around the globe are in a unique position to remake the world, starting with the workforce. However, recent figures highlight the need for dramatic change.

In 2022, closing the pay disparity between men and women would have required 132 years, according to statistics from the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report. That amounts to some \$1.6 trillion lost to pay disparity. It doesn't need to be that way, and women leaders across South Florida are pioneering the parity movement.

"We are in a position to make changes," said Gladys Mezrahi, Founder of The Power of the Heels Foundation, and emcee for the recent 7th annual Innovation Awards and panel discussion hosted by Nicole Shelley, Inc. "We can

make not only a difference but invest in the future of the next generation of women so we can advance into a more equitable place and create a more sustainable impact that we can actually see in our lifetime."

Celebrating the women advancing this common cause was the mission of the event. Held at the Bentley Residences in Sunny Isles Beach, the event honored Miami's most prominent female leaders and changemakers in such sectors as law, finance, real estate, government affairs, philanthropy, media, and health care.

The Lifetime Achievement Award

KICKOFF EVENT & SPECIAL AWARDS, HOSTED BY MASERATI

PARTNERS



AWARDS EVENT, LUNCHEON AND PANEL, HOSTED BY BENTLEY RESIDENCES



Nicole Shelley Models dressed in the latest styles from Zimmerman and Veronica Beard and available at Saks Fifth Avenue Bal Harbour Shops. Sisley Cosmetics gifted every guest a makeover for media interviews. Each attendee also received wellness and beauty gifts from the Carillon Wellness Resort, Saks Fifth Avenue and Sisley.



winner was the Honorable Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney, Eleventh Judicial Court of Florida.

“Miami’s brand once was synonymous with retirement and fun in the sun,” said Nicole Shelley Greenidge Pratico, Executive Director of Nicole Shelley Models, the Miami-based model management and event and project management firm, and founder and host of the event.

“Today, the influx of hedge funds, law firms, technology companies and unprecedented investment in real estate and major world events is in large part being driven by female innovators,” she said. “They’re changing tomorrow today.”

The panel discussion was moderated by Jeneissy Azcuy, Vice President of communications at WPBT2 South Florida PBS. Panelists offered insight on Innovation in a cross section of Miami’s most important industries. They included accountant Maria Toledo, technologist and investor Michelle Abbs, financial advisor Yulien Brenlla, health foundation leader Loreen Chant, Sunny Isles Beach Commissioner Fabiola Stuyvesant and Miami Herald Business Editor Jane Wooldridge.

Azcuy, whose CEO Dolores Fernandez

Alonzo recently won the 2023 Excellence in Innovation Award from America’s Public Television Stations, asked how organizations are advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in their C-suite.

Toledo, a partner with accounting firm Kaufman Rossin, said she’s an example. As a junior manager in 2015, she suggested the creation of an employee resource group for women at the firm. Leadership backed her idea. Today, the firm has more than a dozen ERGs that work internally and in the community

“It’s our responsibility as leaders in the community to support each other, men and women, to work together and embrace everyone in diversity and inclusion,” she said.

Abbs founded Web3 Equity as an educational company to onboard and empower more women to engage in web3 as investors, collectors, creators and builders. She mentioned the names Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates and Elon Musk as drivers of today’s tech sphere. Yet, Miami’s own founding by



Julia Tuttle was the only woman founder of a major U.S. city founded. The modern absence of women helping “shape our daily lives” presents a problem.

“Women haven’t always been at the table,” she said. “The birth of this movement is just starting. So getting more women involved at this inception moment, we don’t have to face a world in the future where the people making those decisions are only men.”

How are organizations advancing innovation in the community? Chant, head of the Health Foundation of South

PARTNERS



2023 HONOREES



Michelle Abbs, Founder & CEO, Web 3 Equity, Technology



Gabrielle Anwar, Actress, Art and Philanthropy



Carolina Garcia Jayaram, Lula Folgosa



Cindy Bromberg, Co-Owner, Farache Bromberg Designs, Interior Design



Yolanda Cash Jackson, Shareholder, Becker, Law



Loren Chant, President/CEO, Health Foundation of South Florida, Health Care, Philanthropy



Jane Wooldridge, Business Editor, Miami Herald, Media



Mayi de La Vega, Founder & CEO, ONE Sotheby's International Realty



Marianne Halvorsen, Insurance, Partner, Baldwin Risk Partners



Dr. Yvonne Johnson-Phillips, CMO, South Miami Hospital, Baptist Health



Alix Lebec, Founder & CEO, Lebec Consulting



Carolina Garcia Jayaram, CEO, The Elevate Prize Foundation, Philanthropy



Dr. Erin Kobetz, University of Miami, Healthcare, Education



Melanie Dickinson, President and Publisher, South Florida Business Journal, Media



Connie Kinnard, Senior Vice President, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Hospitality



Yolanda Pérez, Senior Vice President, Truist, Wealth Management



Dr. Edith Shiro, Healthcare



Christine Perrin Stocco, Owner and Publisher, Stroll Magazine, Media



Fabiola Stuyvesant, Commissioner, Sunny, Isles Beach



Maria Toledo, Principal, Kaufman Rossin, Accounting



Yulien Brenlla, Truist Investment Services Inc., Wealth Management, Leadership

Florida, is maximizing relationships across the community to help channel billions of dollars in purchasing power. Working with the school board, universities and other groups, they're driving connections and providing AI-driven procurement platforms to help women- and minority-owned businesses compete for opportunities.

The Miami Herald pursues innovation across its newsprint and web pages, said Wooldridge, the publication's business editor. Such coverage starts at the local level, she said, at school board and city commission meetings and highlighting news and events that otherwise go

unreported. She called it "accountability journalism."

"The Internet disrupted the business model of every media. Newspapers were the watercooler for communities," said Wooldridge, who encouraged readers to buy subscriptions to their media outlets - and seek the source of the stories they read. "You want to see that it's been fact checked and verified. Talk to your friends about the value of real journalism. We want to be a place where issues can be raised to the top of the agenda, like the issues we're talking about today."

The most impact often comes from the knowledge driving investing and

purchasing. By 2030, women will control about \$11 trillion in financial assets, said Yulien Brenlla, a senior vice president and wealth manager with Truist. By encouraging innovative leadership, spearheaded by their executive ranks, the inclusion of diverse management has helped identify women-owned businesses, especially those that are "underserved and under-appreciated." The teams have crafted a cadre of investment strategies and educational series to meet their needs.

"There's a lot of work that's been done," she said. "But women need to be empowered to take on more of the

AWARDS EVENT, LUNCHEON AND PANEL, HOSTED BY BENTLEY RESIDENCES



decision making in their financial world.”

Want to see innovation in leadership? Consider Fabiola Stuyvesant. The Sunny Isles Beach city commissioner is challenging the status quo. Bringing confidence, independence and a “strong accent” to the table, she’s challenging the role men have held in leadership.

“There are no limits for what we can do. We can be in every sector,” she said. “Just don’t be afraid to put yourself out there. Run for office. Start a new business. If your CEO is retiring, say ‘I want that position. I earned that position.’ We have no limits on what we can accomplish.”

Woolridge highlighted the wealth divide in a county where over half the residents live near poverty. With increased economic opportunity comes increased economic mobility. Some on the panel are actively working to change the figures. Half of the investment made by the Health Foundation of South Florida went toward nursing programs at schools such as Florida Memorial University, Chant said. More remains to be done.

Among the special guests were actress and philanthropist Gabrielle Anwar, Miami Dade College President Madeline Pumariega, Sunny Isles Beach

Commissioner Fabiola Stuyvesant, developer Lissette Calderon, and others. Former honoree, One Sotheby’s International Realty founder and CEO Mayi De la Vega was an honoree for two consecutive years, receiving the 2022 award for Leadership and Legacy and the 2023 Outstanding Service in Real Estate award.

Together, the women Shelley convened the Bentley Residences as panelists, honorees and attendees, represented the power that creative, innovative and empowered women can bring their their careers, companies and communities.