

OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELD - ELIZABETH GHAFFARI



“What is a leader? A leader is someone you want to follow, someone going in a path that is worthy” --Elizabeth Ghaffari

Elizabeth Ghaffari advocates on behalf of women who wish to advance to leadership positions on boards of directors in the 21st century by advising women how to achieve their goals.

She is an author and a speaker at corporations, women's conferences, and educational panels.

Elizabeth Ghaffari was born in Massachusetts, one of six children whose parents (both from the mid-west) valued education dearly. Her mother studied music and early childhood education, while her father was a lawyer. Both influenced Elizabeth's love of reading by exposing her to books about the lives of great people and by their emphasis on the value of her education. Throughout high school, Elizabeth often heard the encouragement of her professors and counselors to “Do your best.” These words continue to influence her perspectives today.

Elizabeth received a Master of Science degree in Management (with honors) with a major in Urban Land Economics in 1973 from the University of California, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Management, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from The American University in Washington, D.C. in 1968. She also completed the inaugural class of the Corporate Governance Program at Stanford University Graduate School of Business Executive Education in May 2003.

“If you want to build a ship, don't gather your people and ask them to provide wood, prepare tools, assign tasks. Call them together and raise in their minds the longing for the endless sea.” -- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Elizabeth's search of opportunities led her to the founding of Technology Place Inc. as a California corporation in 1989. She is the firm's president and chief executive officer and is the principal in charge of developing client corporate online business strategies, giving technical consulting services for business clients in need of successful e-business strategies.

She is also the founder of the Champion Boards which designs great boards of directors through knowledge and information. Through Champion Boards, she provides advice and expertise to top level women in their pursuit of boards of director roles at major corporate and private entities.

“Visions and dreams are not enough to enable you to succeed. The easy path gets you only to the easy goals. You have to demonstrate competence and earn the opportunities. We learn that women in leadership see challenges as ‘opportunities too good to resist.’”

“When I first started in technology, I looked for opportunities to talk to business about how they would benefit by understanding the technology of today in order to build their companies for the future. No business stands still: technology certainly keeps changing, dramatically. Technology Place Inc. was formed to help business stay on top of emerging trends, both here in the U.S. and abroad.”

“Opportunities are all around you no matter where you are in your career or in the world.”

Over 20 years ago, Elizabeth was inspired by the work that Muhammad Yunus was doing in Bangladesh where he founded the Grameen Bank to provide "microcredit loans" to generate opportunities for less privileged populations.

Muhammad Yunus developed his concept of microcredit and "self help organizations" (mini-boards) when he was a professor of economics. Microcredit loans are given to entrepreneurs unable to qualify for traditional bank loans. In 2006, Yunus and the Grameen Bank were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, "for their efforts to create economic and social development from below".

"Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime."

-- Lao Tzu

Elizabeth also has written articles and book chapters on technology and women in leadership. ***Outstanding in Their Field: How Women Corporate Directors Succeed*** is her latest book, published in 2009 by Praeger Publishing/ABC-Clio.

Her book is based on Elizabeth's analysis of the six paths into the boardroom taken by the 114 women on corporate boards at California Fortune 1000 firms, with director profiles of, and interviews with, 15 of those women directors. Each story is different; no one path or decision worked for every woman.

The book provides insight into how women can rise to leadership by identifying the opportunities before them. The result of two years' research and interviews, it identifies specific steps a woman can take to become qualified and competent to serve at the very top, as a director on a for-profit corporate board.

What are her plans for the future? What does she advise?

"I am doing more speaking engagements with professional organizations like the AWA, providing leadership guidance to women who are interested in pursuing a path to leadership positions, including the possibility of a board of director role or creating a board to enable their own business to grow and succeed."

"Do not wait for your career to happen. Look for opportunities with people whom you respect. Build on your own core competency. Ensure that your skill is valued by others in the business marketplace: take that skill to some higher more valued level. Listen to others and learn from them."

"It's up to you. Are you willing to take the steps necessary to become part of tomorrow's leadership? Have you built the foundation? Do you have a strong ethical core? Are you willing to learn? Do you have the time to serve? Are you ready to pursue the opportunities -- not merely wait to be invited to the ball? And finally, do you care enough to make a difference?"

For more information about Elizabeth Ghaffari visit

www.championboards.com

www.outstanding-in-their-field.com

A review of the presentation by Elizabeth Ghaffari on September 17, 2009 at **Annual Meeting and Board Installation Dinner** for the Association for Women in Architecture-Los Angeles (www.awa-la.org) by Ayanthi Fernando.