

TOP 20 WOMEN OF 2010 (PART 1)

December 17, 2010

Selections by Women's Post Editorial Board / Info and Write-ups by Jelena Djurkic and Christine Stoesser

Every year, we at *Women's Post* compile our list of the **Top 20 Women of the Year**. Some of these women are well-known while some operate under the radar. Some have made a spectacular contribution to their industry this year while others are women to watch for in the year to come. They are from different industries, backgrounds, and all have unique characteristics that make them truly great women. Read on for some inspiration and snapshots of our picks. (*Part 1 of 2*)

SHEILA FRASER



You have to be meticulous, diligent, and hard to impress to be **Auditor General of Canada**. Luckily for taxpayers, Sheila Fraser is all that. Born in Dundee, QC, Fraser earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University in 1972 and became a chartered accountant soon after. She worked at Ernst & Young until she became Deputy Auditor General in 1999. For the past 10 years, she's acted as Canada's top financial watchdog, making sure the federal government is spending money prudently and efficiently.

There had never been a female auditor general prior to Fraser. With her term ending next year, she's leaving behind a big legacy, having rocked the nation with her report on the infamous **sponsorship scandal** that exposed the government as it swindled millions out of the public treasury. This year, she expressed concerns over the Canadian military's development projects in Afghanistan and for its proposed purchase of multimillion dollar helicopters. Fraser's known for being brutally honest; her replacement will have big shoes to fill.

PAULINE CHRISTIAN





The road to success was not easy for Pauline Christian. She immigrated to Canada from Jamaica and switched careers, having previously worked as a physical-education teacher. She entered business school and went on to complete her Masters in project management from the York University Schulich School of Business. She did all this while working full-time and caring for her mother and two children. But it was through tragedy that Christian rose up to become **President and CEO** of Best Lifestyle Residence Inc., a retirement and health-care facility for seniors as well as younger individuals with special needs. Her husband had become critically ill and the traditional workforce no longer offered her the flexibility of staying at home.

She also became the President of the **Black Business and Professional Association**, which aims to advance the Black business community. In 2009, she received the African Canadian Achievement Award for Business. Christian is also heavily involved in the community. She is the executive producer of the annual Martin Luther King celebration and works with the National Scholarship Choirfest, which helps raise funds for scholarships for black students. This year, she helped spearhead the first National Black Business and Professional Convention. "I have a zest for life and (am) determined to make a difference in other people's lives and the overall community," Christian has said.

SARAH MCLACHLAN



Sarah McLachlan is a staple on the Canadian and international music scene. Though perhaps known best for her song *I Will Remember You* from her 1999 *Mirrorball* album, she's also played a pivotal role behind the mic. This year, she brought back her all-female concert tour *Lilith Fair*, raising a massive \$500,000 for charity. After the devastating Haiti earthquake in January, she performed for Canada for Haiti. Her youth choir, from the **Sarah McLachlan Music Outreach School** that she founded in 2002, sang with K'Naan

and the Young Artists for Haiti in the *Wavin' Flag* music video, which became an anthem for this year's World Cup.

To top it all off, she also released her first studio album in seven years, *Laws of Illusion*. With eight Juno Awards and three Grammys on her shelf, Sarah has never let success get to her head.

DR. LISA KELLETT



Dr. Lisa Kellett, founder of **DLK on Avenue**, Canada's premier multidisciplinary dermatological facility, has raised the bar in effective skin-care for both men and women. After graduating the University of Toronto's Medical School, where she trained in internal medicine and specialized in dermatology, she went on to study cutaneous laser surgery at Harvard. DLK on Avenue provides state-of-the-art technology and, despite her busy schedule, **Dr. Kellett** ensures she meets every patient personally. Recognized as one of Canada's top dermatologists, she made numerous television appearances in 2010 to educate the public on skin care. Most inspiringly, Dr. Kellett devotes about 25 per cent of her practice to **DLK Cares**, an initiative she started in cooperation with Sick Kids Hospital to repair the faces of scarred children at no cost to their families. She has also extended this generosity to women in need, saying "...maintaining your skin at its optimal health and appearance will greatly contribute to your quality of life."

CATHERINE PORTER



Catherine Porter is a journalist who rises above her job description - not only does she report with readable, informative accuracy, her work is an inspiration to her community.

Catherine, a columnist for the *Toronto Star*, is a former environmental reporter and winner of the National Newspaper Award. The mother of two has traveled to Haiti seven times since the earthquake in January, 2010. The city cyclist and community activist's columns focus on topics from the police conduct at last summer's G20 summit, to Toronto's outlawing of vegetables being planted on boulevards. In a **2010 column**, Catherine's response to misogynistic hate mail she received suggesting she was embarrassed by the government's position on carbon emissions was, "I think it's essential we make more women leaders - in academia, on Bay Street and in Parliament, where they can work to set new rules."

SONIA BAXENDALE



For the past 18 years, **Sonia Baxendale** has paid her retail dues, working her way up to her current position as Senior Executive Vice President of CIBC and President of CIBC Retail Markets. A graduate of the University of Toronto, she worked at American Express Canada and Saatchi & Saatchi prior to joining CIBC. Since then, Baxendale has played a key role in developing strategy and direction for CIBC's retail and wealth-management businesses. Her responsibilities, among many others, expanded this year to include oversight of FirstCaribbean, which has an extensive retail and banking presence in the Caribbean. Currently a boss to over 28,000 employees, there are even rumours that she could be the next head of CIBC.

But Baxendale isn't all business. She loves to give back, serving on the board of the **SickKids Foundation** at the Hospital for Sick Children, and is part of the Executive Council for the Canadian Bankers Association. She also helped raise more than \$33 million for breast cancer research this year as the executive sponsor of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation's **CIBC Run for the Cure**.

JUDY GOLDRING



Judy Goldring has her toe dipped in every facet of **AGF Management Limited**. As **Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer**, she leads the firm's operations, administrative and human resources, supporting Canadian and international offices. As General Counsel, she oversees all of AGF's legal matters. Before joining AGF, Goldring specialized in administrative law. She received her BA in economics at the University of Toronto (U of T) and earned her LLB from Queen's University. Judy was a finalist at this year's Canadian General Counsel Awards, recognizing her leadership at AGF. She even has a building named after her at U of T, having maintained close ties to the school.

But Judy's heart lies with the **Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada (JDRF)**. She became co-chair of the Toronto JDRF Ride for Diabetes Research in 2009. Under her leadership, the single-day event saw over 8,000 riders raise \$2.7 million.

SHARON LOCKWOOD



Blessed with a unique and vibrant imagination, as well as a hard work ethic, Sharon Lockwood has served for 25 years as president and creative director of Toronto's **Line of Sight Design Associates Inc.** While Line of Sight is a small boutique studio, Lockwood has managed to build up a large and impressive list of clients, including Bell Canada, BMO, and Cirque du Soleil. Although the design business is a competitive and tough beast, Lockwood has not only survived it but excelled. She's even helping to cultivate the next generation of designers as a teacher at the Ontario College of Art and Design.

With three children, Lockwood still manages to work on everything from brand development to interior and exhibit design. Serving a diverse group of corporate, institutional and not-for-profit clients, Lockwood does it with style and grace, always making sure that creativity and design come first.

BRENDA BOT



A reformed junk foodie, Brenda Bot lost 140 pounds switching to lighter, fresher food choices. It was this lifestyle change along with her entrepreneurial background that prompted her to bring the **Salad Creations** franchise north to Canada from the U.S. in early 2009. Salad Creations Canada, of which Bot is President, is also a family affair, involving her son, daughter, and husband, with whom she's been running an engineering company for many years in Sudbury, her hometown. Bot knows firsthand that North America is suffering a growing obesity epidemic, due in part to the limited quantity of healthful eateries that offer tasty food, fast. Even though she was advised not to open another food franchise in the middle of a recession, she saw a market for fresh lunch options in the food court to combat the burger and fried chicken mainstays. This year boasts four locations for Salad Creations in Canada and Bot is determined to keep the restaurants popping up across the country. "At **Salad Creations**, the salad is the meal. You'll leave feeling full but light, enjoying exactly the meal you wanted," she says.

COLLEEN CAMPBELL



Breaking the glass ceiling is not an easy endeavour, though many would debate that the overall climate has changed. So when women like **Colleen Campbell** are seen in leadership roles, it's hard not to take notice. **BMO Capital Markets** is a leading North American financial services provider with over 2,000 international employees, and Campbell is currently an Executive Managing Director as well as head of Global Debt Capital Markets. Campbell, who holds an HBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business, has over 30 years of experience in investment banking and is routinely quoted in stock market journals. BMO Capital Markets, which Colleen joined in 1997, is responsible for the general relationship

management of North American government and infrastructure clients. Campbell is also a member of the management committees of BMO Capital Markets, Loan Commitments, and Capital Commitments. With a keen sense for business and remarkable decision-making abilities, Campbell is truly a Capital Woman.

Check back next week to find out the other 10 women who round out the Top 20, and don't forget to nominate an exceptional woman for our [Glass Slipper Awards](#).

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TOP 20 WOMEN OF 2010 (PART 2)

December 24, 2010

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[Click Here for part 1](#)

JANICE FUKAKUSA



When it comes to money, Janice Fukakusa knows a thing or two. As the Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer at RBC, Fukakusa is responsible for setting the strategic direction of Canada's largest financial institution. She's an RBC veteran, having worked at the institution since 1985.

Fukakusa has dabbled in many roles, having spent time in corporate finance, auditing, treasury and retail banking. She was also one of the bank's key leaders through the financial crisis in 2008. Her love of all things finance started in her days at the University of Toronto and continued with an M.B.A from the York University Schulich School of Business. Prior to her days at RBC, she became a chartered accountant and chartered business valuator while working at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. While there is yet to be a female bank CEO —a position, rumours say she might fill — Fukasuka sees the role of women in banking as stronger than ever. "It allows us to be more innovative and better serve our clients - many of whom are women who today play a strong role in financial decision-making. It's the right thing, but also the smart thing, to do," Fukasuka has said.

ANGELA ROBERTSON





Angela Robertson has spent her life helping other women. Currently the Director of Equity and Community Engagement at Women's College Hospital, she has been an active member and leader of the Black and women's communities, helping implement various programs to help support those in need. As the previous Executive Director of Sistering - A Woman's Place, an organization that offers support to homeless and low-income women, Robertson helped double the agency's budget and facilitated the expansion of the agency's headquarters.

A York University graduate, Robertson has also been heavily involved in the Black Queer community, co-founding Blockorama, a celebration of black PRIDE, which marked its 12th anniversary this year. She has been a key member of mobilizing campaigns for social justice issues, from her early days at York where she founded the group, Black Women at York, to her current position as chair of the governance board of the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention. She's a lady with a heart, whose compassion and vision has helped, and still continues to help, the most marginalized women in our community.

JOELLE BERDUGO-ADLER



Joelle Berdugo-Adler has been a powerhouse in the fashion industry serving as President and CEO of Diesel Canada Inc. for over twenty years; it is her philanthropy however, that makes her stand out as one of our top women of the year. Berdugo-Adler, along with her husband and business partner Louis Adler, helped establish Diesel Canada as one of Canada's most successful denim brands.

In 2004, Berdugo-Adler created the Lou Adler Foundation, which helped raise funds for cancer-related charities, following her husband's tragic death from the disease. Since then, the Foundation has evolved into the ONEXONE Foundation, helping to improve the lives of children around the world. After the January earthquake in Haiti, ONEXONE sent millions of dollars worth of goods to help affected families and children. Just recently, it announced a \$3 million commitment to help build a hospital in Haiti. We're not the only ones who think ONEXONE is great, just ask Matt Damon, the foundation's ambassador. He's one of the many celebrities who has been involved with Berdugo-Adler's mission. "Not a single life, anywhere in the world, is expendable. By combining passion with action, we can inspire others to commit to improving the world, one person at a time," Berdugo-Adler has said.

CORA TSOUFLIDOU



Success has been served sunny side up for Cora Tsoufidou since 1987. It was around this time that Tsoufidou bought a small Montreal snack bar, eventually transforming it into one of Canada's most delectable and recognized breakfast diners. But it wasn't all pancakes and syrup. Her story is one of reinvention and creativity. Her husband left her with three teenage kids to support and Tsoufidou was forced to find a way to survive. With some delicious crepes, a pinch of creativity and a solid business plan, she is now the head of an entire Cora's empire.

The company has been named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies multiple times and currently has 115 franchised restaurants across the country. Best known for her bright smile, Tsoufidou brought back breakfast with style, healthy, fresh ingredients and the famous signage that adorns each colourful restaurant. This year she released her autobiography, *Breakfast with Cora*, detailing her journey through food and business. A self-made woman, Tsoufidou gracefully manages both the kitchen and boardroom table.

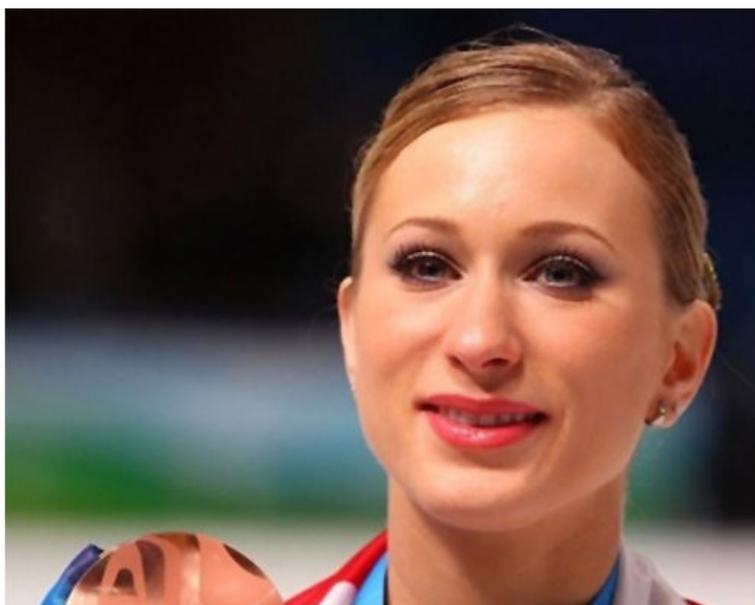
MARY ANNE CHAMBERS



Whether she's on top of the financial world, arguing on behalf of constituents, or mentoring young women, Mary Anne Chambers has always done it with integrity and a love for her home country of Jamaica. She emigrated to Canada from the Caribbean country in 1976 and joined Scotiabank as a computer programmer and analyst, moving up the financial institution's corporate ladder to the position of Senior Vice-President. In 2002, Chambers retired and set her sights on politics. Less than a year later, she was elected as a Member of Provincial Parliament, serving first as the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and then as the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Along the way, she's supported many causes, serving on the boards of the YMCA of Greater Toronto, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and as presidents of P.A.C.E. Canada, an organization that supports early childhood development. Through her role at P.A.C.E, she sponsors two schools in Jamaica, adopting 28 schools in the last seven months. A dedicated community volunteer, Chambers has also funded over 30 scholarships for first year post-secondary students and started a mentorship program with the University of Toronto Scarborough for middle and high school students.

JOANNIE ROCHETTE



The Vancouver Olympics showcased the talents of Canada's top female athletes, but viewers of the 2010 games will hold the brave and emotional performance of Montreal's Joannie Rochette in their memories for years to come.

Rochette, a medalist in the World Championships, was under pressure to earn a place on

the Vancouver podium before the unexpected happened: Her mother died of a heart attack just days before her competition. The 24-year-old figure skater trained her whole life for the Olympics and knew her mother would have wanted more than anything for her to compete, so she held her head high and followed through with her dream. The country seemed to mourn with her as she fearlessly skated through her short program, breaking down only after the music had stopped. Her long program, dedicated to her mother, brought many viewers to tears and earned Rochette a bronze medal. Her win was one of the most inspirational displays of courage and determination Canadians have seen from an athlete; it was also the first time a Canadian female figure skater has been on the Olympic podium since 1988.

CONNIE CLERICI



Connie Clerici combines sharp powers of observation with the can-do attitude of a woman who takes what she sees and turns it into something far better. A Registered Nurse with a Bachelor of Health Science in Nursing, Connie worked for years in hospitals and community health centres before deciding that health care needed higher standards, particularly for patients suffering from long-term illnesses. She took out a loan and founded Closing The Gap Healthcare in 1980, a company that specializes in providing personal health services in homes, schools, work places and long-term care homes.

Twenty years later, Closing The Gap Healthcare's revenue is in the millions, the organization is receiving government support, and in 2010 Connie herself was inducted into the Top 100 Hall of Fame for *Canada's Most Powerful Women*. On receiving her award, Connie said, "I accept this honour on behalf of all women in healthcare and more specifically on behalf of the passionate woman leaders within Closing The Gap Healthcare Group."

ERICA DIAMOND



Erica Diamond started her first business when she was 24. The promotional company, *Unique Corporate Gifts*, founded in 1999, earned her financial success, entrepreneurial awards and appearances in the media. However, Erica dreamed about creating an inspirational and informative hub for women, so she sold her company in 2006 and founded *womenonthefence.com*, a blog that focuses on the many roles that women play in their lives.

Written primarily by Erica, but also featuring various guest bloggers, *womenonthefence.com* has already won significant recognition from other online communities since its inception in 2009. In addition to running the blog, Erica regularly speaks to and mentors other entrepreneurs, and in 2010 was the headlined speaker at the National Women's Show. Erica takes a down to earth approach in her blog in order to inspire women to be the best they can be—without being too hard on themselves. As she wrote in 2010, "We're told to be sexy for our partners, nurturing for our children, savvy in business, a loyal friend, in other words...perfect. But who's perfect? Yup, you know the answer."

KATHY BARDSWICK



Kathy Bardswick knows a thing or two about teamwork as President and CEO of Canada's leading insurance company, The Co-Operators. A graduate of McMaster's M.B.A. program, Kathy joined The Co-operators in 1978. She worked as COO of The Sovereign General and L'Union Canadienne from 1998-2002 before she was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Group on March 1, 2002. The past few years have not been easy in the insurance industry; with Kathy's leadership, her company implemented progressive business plans to

support environmental longevity.

In the last two years alone, The Co-operators has started to provide additional coverage in restoring property with environmentally friendly options after a claim, discounts on auto insurance for hybrid vehicles as well as options that allow customers to invest in companies with strong ties to environmental protection and human rights. Kathy says these important progressive ideas were inspired by her children: “We would talk more and more at the dinner table on issues of health, well being, and physical resources. I had all of this in my head - that I wasn’t doing enough as a leader of this organization, as a parent in my family, and as a member of my community...”

SUSAN NICZOWSKI



In the early nineties, Susan Niczowski, along with her mother Francis, found themselves consumers in a marketplace of ready-to-go cuisine. There were TV dinners and microwaveable meals, but as Susan and her mom quickly distinguished, there was a need for *fresh* food that could be served fast. Susan, who holds a B. Sc. in Chemistry from the University of Toronto, began her career as a Microbiologist at Maple Leaf Foods. Once she identified the market value of readymade fresh food, she and Francis founded Summer Fresh Salads Inc. in 1991. These days, Summer Fresh is a household name not only in Toronto but across much of North America; the multi-million dollar company is well known for its array of salads, dips, appetizers and soups.

Susan’s venture into the world of food and entrepreneurial experience was supported by an idea that Summer Fresh Salads has trademarked: Food is Fashion™. Says Susan, “Essentially, it means that while the staples like meat and potatoes stay the same, the foods that you use to accessorize this dish change with the seasons like fashion. Whatever the season, you can be confident that Summer Fresh is setting trends with many new and exciting product introductions with every quarter.”

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