

LEADING WOMEN at the UCLA ZIMAN CENTER

In the second event organized by the Leading Women at the Ziman Center for Real Estate at UCLA, **Bonnie Hill** and **Elizabeth Ghaffari** were featured speakers on the topic, “Becoming a Corporate Director: Serving on an Influential Board” July 29, 2010. Latham & Watkins hosted the event at their downtown Los Angeles offices. Cindy Starrett welcomed the 40 attendees and recognized the ten founding members of the Ziman Leading Women. Cindy is the Los Angeles partner and head of the Environment, Land and Resources practice and Global Co-Chair of the Land Use Practice Group at Latham & Watkins. Ayahlushim Hammond, Senior Vice President at Thomas Properties Group (TPG), provided background on the Ziman Leading Women’s organization. Theresa Jones, Chief Operating Officer of Hackman Capital Partners, provided the guest introductions. **Latham & Watkins, Thomas Properties Group and Hackman Capital Partners sponsored the event.**

The evening was “a conversation about governance” with **Bonnie Hill**, President of B. Hill Enterprises LLC, cofounder of Icon Blue, and a corporate director with extensive public and nonprofit board experience and **Elizabeth Ghaffari**, Founder of Champion Boards, President of Technology Place Inc. and author of *Outstanding in their Field; How Women Corporate Directors Succeed* (Praeger: 2009).

For each of 6 topics, Elizabeth presented selected facts from her research followed. Bonnie followed with insights from her extensive personal experience as a corporate director. The topics included:

1. What is a director’s role or job?
2. What skills are necessary for board service?
3. What are the key differences between public, private and non-profit board service?
4. What is a board’s selection process for new or additional director candidates?
5. How do you know if you are an effective board member?
6. How do you position yourself to be a candidate for board service?

Take aways include:

1. A board seat is not a retirement plan.
2. Explore how your area of expertise will bring value to a board; being a woman and/or a minority is not enough.
2. Be inquisitive AND diplomatic.
3. Seek out mentors – and be a prodigy worthy of mentoring.
4. Be prepared in board meetings; shareholders, your peers, and your insurance require it.

Resources:

Bonnie Hill interview with the Metropolitan Corporate Counsel (May 1, 2007):

<http://www.metrocorpcounsel.com/current.php?artType=view&artMonth=July&artYear=2010&EntryNo=6632>

National Association of Corporate Directors: Key Agreed Principles

<https://secure.nacdonline.org/source/members/whitepapers-new/index.cfm>

NewsOnWomen.com:

<http://newsonwomen.com/>

Champion Boards: governance resources

<http://www.championboards.com/>

Outstanding in their Field: How Women Corporate Directors Succeed

<http://outstanding-in-their-field.com/>

ABC-Clio interview with Elizabeth Ghaffari

<http://abcclio.blogspot.com/2010/07/author-interview-elizabeth-ghaffari-on.html>