



Global
Business Leadership

SHAKING THE GLOBE NEWSLETTER

Courageous
Decision-making in
a Changing World



Mothers, Daughters, and Tomorrow

Volume 1, issue 4

On Mother's Day, it is appropriate that we think about the roles of women in the global economy. I have spent much of my career helping women to overcome cultural and self-imposed limitations in order to find fulfillment in business. Today, I am troubled by friends and colleagues who oppose globalization because of the potential deleterious effects it may have on women's rights. Nobody can be blind to the discrimination women encounter in education and employment in many cultures throughout the world. But, I believe that globalization can help to combat this discrimination and that progress in recognizing women's rights can be made while still being open to and accepting of cultural differences.

As the authors of the 2008 "Global Employment Trends for Women" wrote: "Decent work for women is also a precondition for economic development since, in the long run, economies cannot afford to ignore an untapped resource such as that which could be offered by female labour." As organizations extend their reach in this interconnected world, the hidden and unused talent of women may be a decisive factor in raising standards of living in countries that welcome economic progress but do not want changes in their cultural status quo.

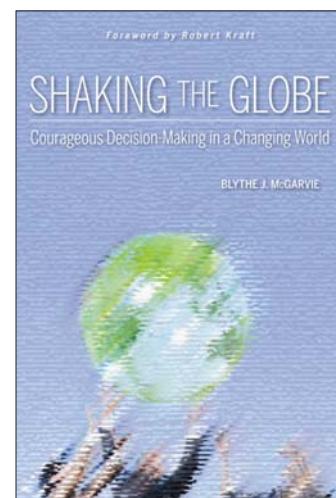
*Remember, Ginger Rogers
did everything Fred Astaire did, but
she did it backwards and in high heels.*

— Ambassador Faith Whittlesey

Many advocates of women's rights say that boycotts may be more effective than complicity in promoting full economic and political rights to women and other minority groups. I disagree. I believe social changes will be an outcome of the benefits of the expanded marketplace. The ideology behind free markets is rooted in an appreciation of each individual, man or woman, as a free, rational, reasonable, and independent decision-maker, operating out of perceived self-interest in making economic choices. Market opportunities will encourage a greater acceptance of the ideology that underlies them. Cultural changes cannot be imposed by U.S. businesses or by laws from the U.S. government. But, if market laws are truly universal, their acceptance should lead to a growing acceptance of their underlying premises. I have full confidence that the opening of markets through free enterprise will provide radical changes in the rights of women.



McGarvie with U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) at the recent Most Powerful Women Dinner, sponsored by *Fortune Magazine*.



Blythe McGarvie's *Shaking the Globe*, with a foreword by Robert Kraft, was published by John Wiley & Sons in February 2009. Purchase it at these or other fine book sellers:

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In many countries, societal values teach women to stay at home and take care of the family. Women who seek employment outside of their homes are often forced to work in menial jobs and generally receive lower wages than men. However, the market demand for employees is encouraging even societies that reflect such values to educate women, allowing them to acquire skills that are highly desirable and command higher wages. I often use the story of a young Dutch female attorney I met in Paris in 1993 to paint a picture of this dynamic. When I asked my colleague why she chose to work in Paris as opposed to living closer to home, she patiently explained to me that The Netherlands was the last place she ever wanted to work because women in Dutch companies often were relegated to perfunctory roles. Historical precedents and cultural barriers helped to produce this environment. Dutch women never joined the workforce during the World Wars and current tax laws penalize families with more than one wage earner. Accordingly, there are fewer women per capita working in The Netherlands today than in Turkey, a largely Muslim nation that is run by a secular government that is increasingly encouraging women to participate in business. Courageous leaders need to understand why some nations support women in the workplace and others actively discourage it in order to turn these disparities into opportunities, both in emerging markets and in the developed world.

I am a woman above everything else.

—Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Western countries can hardly be smug about their employment of women. There are only 12 women CEOs leading *Fortune* 500 companies. Women held only 14.8 percent of all available board seats of those 500 companies. But this shortcoming is by no means limited to just the United States. Research conducted by Cass Business School on behalf of *Chief Executive Officer* magazine found that just 16 out of 1,450 companies around the world were headed by a female CEO. In other words, there is much work still to be done. As depressing as those numbers seem, they are reality.

While I don't consider myself to be a radical feminist, I do think of myself a radical *equalist*. Women are too often undervalued and underutilized, which adds up to countless lost economic opportunities. ♦♦♦

Global Perspective: Items of Note

Blythe McGarvie's *Shaking the Globe* is reviewed in the [Hampton Roads Business Journal](#).

Blythe McGarvie publishes, "A director's 5 rules for difficult times," in *Directors and Boards*, Spring 2009 ([PDF](#)).

Blythe McGarvie writes, "Staying Green with the Economy in the Red: Why Your Environmental Initiatives Matter Even More in Difficult Times" in the *The Deluxe Knowledge Quarterly* ([PDF](#)).

Blythe McGarvie and her *Shaking the Globe* book are featured by [Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management](#).

Blythe McGarvie has opened up a new blog on the [The Huffington Post](#). Read her new entry on [100 Days of Obama and the Global Economy](#).

LIF Affiliate Update:

Laura Martin of [Capital Knowledge](#) releases her latest report on [CBS](#).

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