

Business league bestows awards

Regal Realty CEO E. Leigh Battle is Entrepreneur of Year

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The Metropolitan Business League recognized E. Leigh Battle as winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award at last night's awards banquet. Battle is the CEO and broker with Regal Realty & Associates.

A sold-out crowd of 700 attended the black-tie event at the Richmond Marriott. The awards dinner closed two days of networking, seminars and workshops for small and minority businesses.

Battle, a native of Southwest Virginia, started her business in 1992 after working for what is now Verizon for 18 years.

Juan Williams, a political analyst, author and award-winning columnist and editorial writer, was the keynote speaker for the 18th annual membership and awards banquet.

Williams' talk focused on change happening at an incredibly fast rate.

In this year's presidential election, for example, "Women are the key constituency," he said, adding that suburban women supported Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., in New Hampshire and African-American women supported Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., in South Carolina.

Demographic change not only affects politics, but business, Williams said.

"Change gets lost on people," he said. "And business owners have to be in touch with demographic changes."

But he also reminded the audience that 40 years after the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., some things still have not improved, such as the poverty rate, the dropout rate of schoolchildren.

Also honored were:

- Anne Oliver, director of supplier diversity, and Lowell Carrington, manager of supplier diversity, both with Dominion, with the Distinguished Service Award;
- Consolidated Bank & Trust Co., Virginia Commonwealth University and Wachovia Bank with Trailblazer Awards;
- Philip Morris USA and My Lan Tran, program manager with the Richmond Office of Minority Business Development, with corporate and individual Vision of Excellence Awards;
- Greater Richmond Partnership with the League Leadership Award;
- Jesse A. Moore, president of Moore's Auto Body & Paint Inc., with the Lifetime Achievement Award; and
- Cuppa Tea Co., run by Lurline and Allan Wagner, with the Promising Start-Up Award, a new category.

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