After a brief hiatus, TCW’s 100 Women feature was revived three years ago. Between 100 WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE in July 2011, 100 WOMEN TO WATCH in 2012 and 100 WOMEN OF INSPIRATION in 2013, these lists of intelligent, powerful, hardworking women generated a big buzz around town. We featured diverse groups from a variety of professions, including arts, education, finance, government, healthcare, philanthropy and more. This year, we’ve assembled a list of 100 WOMEN OF INSPIRATION – ladies from the Chicago area who’ve done incredible work in their personal and/or professional lives. You’ll recognize familiar faces from previous 100 Women lists and new women we haven’t yet featured. Due to space constraints, we’ve only printed portions of their bios, but their inspiring contributions go far beyond what’s listed here. And although we’ve omitted some women who are, indeed, inspirational, we limited our selection to 100.
Sabina Abdul-Qadir
FOUNDER/MEMBER/DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICE, MUSLIM WOMEN’S ALLIANCE
Sabina Abdul-Qadir is an attorney who specializes in land use and zoning, residential and commercial real estate, non-profit development and immigration. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Sabina Abdul-Qadir spearheads MWAS’ Ramadan Rush for Rewards campaign, a month-long series of events including food drives for refugee families, talent shows for medically fragile children and helping serve meals at various homeless shelters.

Ann Alvarez
PRESIDENT/CEO, CASA CENTRAL
Ann Alvarez has served as president of Casa Central since 1996. A longtime resident of Chicago, she also served the Humboldt Park and West Town communities as a licensed certified social worker in Chicago Public Schools. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Throughout her tenure, Ms. Alvarez has been a strong advocate for the needs of Latinos in Illinois, leading Casa Central through agency-wide accreditation in 1997 and winning numerous awards for her work.

Lindsay Avner
FOUNDER/CEO, BRIGHT PINK
In 2007, Lindsay Avner founded the only national, non-profit focused on the prevention and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: With a family history of breast and ovarian cancer, Ms. Avner was the youngest patient in the U.S. to opt for a risk-reducing double mastectomy with reconstruction at age 23. Now 32, she continues to inspire women to assess their risk and keep the conversation going.

Susan Axelrod
FOUNDER, CURE
Susan Axelrod’s life changed forever when her seven-month-old son, Max, was diagnosed with epilepsy in 1981. Since then, she’s been at the forefront of advocating for improved research in understanding and treating epilepsy. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Always one to take matters into her own hands, Ms. Axelrod has helped fund more than 160 projects in 12 countries and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Colorado College for her tireless work.

Barbara Bates
FOUNDER, THE BARBARA BATES FOUNDATION
For over 25 years, Barbara Bates has been known nationwide as a leader in creating fashionable styles for celebrities and the everyday man and woman. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Since Ms. Bates won her battle with breast cancer in 2009, she has dedicated her time to advocacy and community involvement. Each year, she holds the “Knocking Out Breast Cancer” fashion show, which features cancer survivors modeling their clothes and supports outreach/education programs.

Jennifer Bazon
FIREFIGHTER, CITY OF WILMETTE
Jennifer Bazon originally pursued a career with animals, swimming with dolphins during a five-year stint at the Shedd Aquarium, before joining the Fire Department in Wilmette over 13 years ago. She is also a vital part of the city’s Dive Rescue Team. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Bazon is the only female firefighter in the city of Wilmette. She may be part of a boy’s world, but she doesn’t let it stop her from doing what she loves and being a true hero day in and day out.

Nely Berguma
CO-FOUNDER, PENEDO CHARArlITABLE ORGANIZATION
In 1967, Nely Berguma and her family left Cuba for the U.S. Her family’s own experiences and challenges as a woman shaped her career and influenced her decision to co-found Penedo Charitable Organization (PCO) with her sister Susy. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Through PCO, Ms. Berguma helps at-risk teens reach their potential, and it sets them to be mentors to other girls with similar backgrounds.

Neeta Bhushan, MD
COSMETIC DENTIST, LISLE DENTAL CENTER
Dr. Neeta Bhushan has found success as a general cosmetic dentist. On the side, she founded Independent1st, taking on the role as an educator, advocate and enlightening women through self-love, self-confidence and self-expression. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Before age 20, Dr. Bhushan lost three immediate family members and was left sole caretaker for her younger brother. Overcoming her fear of being alone, she now works tirelessly to make sure young women find their own self-worth.

Anita Alvarez
STATE ATTORNEY, COOK COUNTY
Since 2008, Anita Alvarez has led the second largest prosecutor’s office in the nation, managing an office of nearly 1,600 attorneys and administrative employees. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Alvarez is the first female and first Latina elected to Cook County State’s Attorney. She’s also the first career prosecutor elected to this important public safety position. Under her leadership, the office enacted many important public safety initiatives that have been signed into law.

Stephanie Arnold
EMMY-NOMINATED TELEVISION EXECUTIVE
Stephanie Arnold spent 27 years in the television industry, from working in local news to directing and producing music videos, information, educational documentaries and both syndicated and network shows. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Arnold was clinically dead for 37 seconds after giving birth to her second child, Jacob. She suffered a catastrophic amniotic fluid embolism (SAFE), and since surviving the rare condition has devoted her life as an advocate for SAFE awareness.

Jennifer Bazan
Dive Rescue Team.

Anne Burke
SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT, STATE OF ILLINOIS
Justice Anne Burke has endeavored to provide a voice to society’s most fragile citizens. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Justice Burke was the first woman to serve on the Illinois Supreme Court of Claims. She also co-founded Special Olympics Chicago in 1968 and served as a director of that organization as it grew to become the International Special Olympics represented in more than 160 countries.

Susan Carlins
HEALTH ENTHUSIAST
Growing up with simple, healthy food set Susan Carlins on her way of life. She inspires others to do the same by providing educational books and juicers, and linking them with a nutritionist, physical therapist and bodywork therapist. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Carlins has organized fashion shows and other events to help restore Washington Square Park to its former glory. She also helped establish a scholarship program at Ogden International School.

Julie Chevez
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT/CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MARKET MANAGER, BANK OF AMERICA
Julie Chevez is responsible for managing a variety of programs in areas like philanthropy and volunteerism for the Chicago area. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING:Julie Chevez sits on the boards of multiple organizations, including Metropolitan Family Services, National Museum of Mexican Art, National Veterans Art Museum and Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority.

Stacey Feeley Cavanagh
PARTNER, CAVANAGH LAW GROUP
As a partner at one of Chicago’s premier personal injury law firms, Stacey Feeley Cavanagh has been named one of the Top 100 trial lawyers by The National Trial Lawyers organization. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After struggling with infertility, Ms. Cavanagh is the proud mother of two sets of triplets and continues to run a successful law firm while parenting six children with her husband (and business partner), Tim.

Mei-Ann Chen
MUSIC DIRECTOR, CHICAGO SINFORNIELLA
Maestra Mei-Ann Chen earned her master’s in violin and conducting at the New England Conservatory and a doctorate in conducting at the University of Michigan. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Mei-Ann Chen became the first woman to win the Malko Competition in Copenhagen and in 2012 received the Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras.

Stacy Franklin
FOUNDER, BEAR NECESSITIES
A pioneer of Chicago’s disability rights movement and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer, Ms. Franklin has dedicated her time to advocacy and community involvement. Each year, she holds the “Knocking Out Breast Cancer” fashion show, which features cancer survivors modeling their clothes and supports outreach/education programs.

Linda McGill Boasmond
OWNER/President, CEDAR CONCEPTS
In 1968, Linda McGill Boasmond left the corporate environment for the relatively small Cedar Concepts. She became the managing owner and a partner. Later, she acquired the company from one of the surviving founders in 2004 and became the sole owner. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Boasmond runs the country’s first and only African-American, woman-owned chemical manufacturing plant, and just completed the process of constructing the first ground-up chemical manufacturing facility within Chicago in over 50 years.

Bonnie Case
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ADVOCATE
WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: In the face of political and social adversity, Ms. Case has been a reproductive health advocate and women’s rights advocate for 35 years. Through her work, she has inspired millions of women, girls and people around the world.

Susan Chen
MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHICAGO ENVESTIGATIONS
As a managing director at one of Chicago’s leading corporate investigations firms, Susan Chen has significant experience in public and political investigations.

Stacy Feeley Cavanagh
PARTNER, CAVANAGH LAW GROUP
As a partner at one of Chicago’s premier personal injury law firms, Stacey Feeley Cavanagh has been named one of the Top 100 trial lawyers by The National Trial Lawyers organization. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After struggling with infertility, Ms. Cavanagh is the proud mother of two sets of triplets and continues to run a successful law firm while parenting six children with her husband (and business partner), Tim.

Stacy Feeley Cavanagh
PARTNER, CAVANAGH LAW GROUP
As a partner at one of Chicago’s premier personal injury law firms, Stacey Feeley Cavanagh has been named one of the Top 100 trial lawyers by The National Trial Lawyers organization. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After struggling with infertility, Ms. Cavanagh is the proud mother of two sets of triplets and continues to run a successful law firm while parenting six children with her husband (and business partner), Tim.
Sunny P. Chico

Founder/President, SPC Educational Solutions

A former special education teacher and school principal, Sunny P. Chico founded SPC Educational Solutions and authored You: Your Child's First Teacher. She serves as a leader for her community and works to build a high school for students in Kibwe, Zambia.

Kendall Ciesemier

Founder, Kids Caring 4 Kids

After watching a feature on AIDS orphans in Africa, Kendall Ciesemier founded Kids Caring 4 Kids in 2001 to support children in sub-Saharan Africa. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Despite undergoing two liver transplants due to a rare disease, Ms. Ciesemier has helped raise nearly $1 million, is a junior at Georgetown University and is working to build a high school for students in Kibwe, Zambia.

Margi Cole

Founder, The Dance Collective

Margi Cole is also the artistic director and choreographer at The Dance Collective. Her contemporary dance company, now in its 19th season, puts on an incredible annual showcase.

Julia Collins

20-Time Jeopardy! Winner

Julia Collins fulfilled a lifelong dream when she appeared on Jeopardy! Finally, meeting Alex Trebek and winning an impressive 12 times.

Marae Daly

Chief External Affairs Officer, Feeding America

Marae Daly oversees divisions that build innovative partnerships with philanthropic foundations, conduct extensive research on hunger and promote public education and awareness about the issue. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Daly is leading a transformational initiative to help clients achieve self-sufficiency and household stability and build long-term food security in communities across the country.

Rebecca Darr

CEO, Wing’s Program, Inc.

Rebecca Darr founded Wing’s Program, Inc. in 1999 as executive director and was named Executive Director of the Year by United Way in her first year. She became CEO last year. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Rebecca’s dynamic and decisive leadership has resulted in the growth of the small agency into one of the largest regional providers of housing and services to victims of domestic violence and their children.

Karen Freeman-Wilson

Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana

Karen Freeman-Wilson has made a concerted effort to tackle Gary, Indiana’s drug issues. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, she has consulted with the White House on drug control policy. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Mayor Freeman-Wilson was instrumental in developing the drug court movement in Indiana. She was twice elected as the city’s judge and, in 2011, became its first female mayor.

Barbara Gruen

Founder/Artistic Director, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre

Through Barbara Guines’ vision and guidance, a small troupe that performed on the rooftops of Lincoln Park’s Red Lion Pub in 1986 later became the internationally acclaimed Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: The theatre received a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 2008, and Ms. Gaines received an honorary OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 2006.

Katie Arens Driscoll

Photographer, 5 Boys + 1 Girl = 6 Photography

Katie Arens Driscoll is a mother to six children who spends her time homeschooling the kids while blogging and running a freelance photography business. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Driscoll advocates for the inclusion of individuals with different abilities in advertising and mainstream media through her photography campaign “Changing the Face of Beauty,” which has received global recognition.

Michelle Ernsdorff

Founder, Compass to Care

Becoming a cancer survivor before age three was no small feat for Michelle Ernsdorff. Now, she is living to make a difference through the Compass to Care organization. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After years of working in healthcare, Ms. Ernsdorff walked away from the lifestyle that being a vice president of marketing afforded her to ensure all children who battle cancer can access life-saving treatment.

Lisa Faust, PhD

Vice President of Conservation and Science, Lincoln Park Zoo

Dr. Lisa Faust provides over the zoo’s research centers that focus on the study of local and global wildlife health, population and behavior. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Dr. Faust brings biology and technology together, having spearheaded the development of software programs such as PopLink, which helps experts monitor and assess the welfare of zoo populations.

Jodi Fyfe

Principal, Paramount Events

With 20 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, Jodi Fyfe launched a successful catering company with business partner Tony Pontillo in 2011. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Fyfe, who was honored in honor of her cousin, Carrie, who lost her battle with breast cancer. In the last three years, her fundraising efforts have helped raise $1 million for Bright Pink’s life-saving mission.

Jann Garth

Founder/Principal, Studio Gang Architects

Jeanne Gang founded Studio Gang Architects in 1997. She explores the design of revi- talizing cities, and her work ranges from community anchors and cultural institutions to tall, mixed-use buildings and urban design. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Architect of the acclaimed Aqua Tower, Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo and University of Chicago’s Campus North project, Ms. Gang is internationally recognized for her visually striking work and environmentally sensitive approach.

Rebecca Darr

CEO, Wing’s Program, Inc.

Rebecca Darr founded Wing’s Program, Inc. in 1999 as executive director and was named Executive Director of the Year by United Way in her first year. She became CEO last year. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Rebecca’s dynamic and decisive leadership has resulted in the growth of the small agency into one of the largest regional providers of housing and services to victims of domestic violence and their children.

Karen Freeman-Wilson

Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana

Karen Freeman-Wilson has made a concerted effort to tackle Gary, Indiana’s drug issues. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, she has consulted with the White House on drug control policy. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Mayor Freeman-Wilson was instrumental in developing the drug court movement in Indiana. She was twice elected as the city’s judge and, in 2011, became its first female mayor.

Jodi Fyfe

Principal, Paramount Events

With 20 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, Jodi Fyfe launched a succ- esful catering company with business partner Tony Pontillo in 2011. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Fyfe, who was honored in honor of her cousin, Carrie, who lost her battle with breast cancer. In the last three years, her fundraising efforts have helped raise $1 million for Bright Pink’s life-saving mission.

Jann Garth

Founder/Principal, Studio Gang Architects

Jeanne Gang founded Studio Gang Architects in 1997. She explores the design of revi- talizing cities, and her work ranges from community anchors and cultural institutions to tall, mixed-use buildings and urban design. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Architect of the acclaimed Aqua Tower, Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo and University of Chicago’s Campus North project, Ms. Gang is internationally recognized for her visually striking work and environmentally sensitive approach.

Barbara Gruen

Founder/Artistic Director, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre

Through Barbara Guines’ vision and guidance, a small troupe that performed on the rooftops of Lincoln Park’s Red Lion Pub in 1986 later became the internationally acclaimed Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: The theatre received a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 2008, and Ms. Gaines received an honorary OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 2006.

Katie Arens Driscoll

Photographer, 5 Boys + 1 Girl = 6 Photography

Katie Arens Driscoll is a mother to six children who spends her time homeschooling the kids while blogging and running a freelance photography business. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Driscoll advocates for the inclusion of individu- als with different abilities in advertising and mainstream media through her photography campaign “Changing the Face of Beauty,” which has received global recognition.

Michelle Ernsdorff

Founder, Compass to Care

Becoming a cancer survivor before age three was no small feat for Michelle Ernsdorff. Now, she is living to make a difference through the Compass to Care organization. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After years of working in healthcare, Ms. Ernsdorff walked away from the lifestyle that being a vice president of marketing afforded her to ensure all children who battle cancer can access life-saving treatment.

Lisa Faust, PhD

Vice President of Conservation and Science, Lincoln Park Zoo

Dr. Lisa Faust provides over the zoo’s research centers that focus on the study of local and global wildlife health, population and behavior. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Dr. Faust brings biology and technology together, having spearhead- ed the development of software programs such as PopLink, which helps experts monitor and assess the welfare of zoo populations.

Jodi Fyfe

Principal, Paramount Events

With 20 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, Jodi Fyfe launched a suc- cessful catering company with business partner Tony Pontillo in 2011. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Fyfe, who was honored in honor of her cousin, Carrie, who lost her battle with breast cancer. In the last three years, her fundraising efforts have helped raise $1 million for Bright Pink’s life-saving mission.

Jann Garth

Founder/Principal, Studio Gang Architects

Jeanne Gang founded Studio Gang Architects in 1997. She explores the design of revi- talizing cities, and her work ranges from community anchors and cultural institutions to tall, mixed-use buildings and urban design. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Architect of the acclaimed Aqua Tower, Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo and University of Chicago’s Campus North project, Ms. Gang is internationally recognized for her visually striking work and environmentally sensitive approach.

Barbara Gruen

Founder/Artistic Director, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre

Through Barbara Guines’ vision and guidance, a small troupe that performed on the rooftops of Lincoln Park’s Red Lion Pub in 1986 later became the internationally acclaimed Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: The theatre received a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 2008, and Ms. Gaines received an honorary OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 2006.

Katie Arens Driscoll

Photographer, 5 Boys + 1 Girl = 6 Photography

Katie Arens Driscoll is a mother to six children who spends her time homeschooling the kids while blogging and running a freelance photog- raphy business. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Driscoll advocates for the inclusion of individu- als with different abilities in advertising and mainstream media through her photography campaign “Changing the Face of Beauty,” which has received global recognition.
Judith Kegan Gardiner, PhD  
*CO-FOUNDER/PROFESSOR, GENDER & WOMEN'S STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO*

Growing up with a mother who was an attorney during a time that was rife with gender and class bias, it seemed only natural for Dr. Judith Kegan Gardiner to continue her mother’s legacy. Why She’s Inspiring: In addition to publishing many books and papers, Dr. Gardiner is co-founder and past director of the UIC Women’s Studies Program.

Sue Ling Gin  
*FOUNDER/CEO, FLYING FOOD GROUP*

In 1987, Sue Ling Gin founded a privately held, large-scale catering company providing exceptional passenger meals for commercial airlines. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Gin founded Flying Food Group with just one domestic airline customer and one catering kitchen. Today, the company produces airline passenger and private label meals from a network of 18 U.S. production kitchens for over 70 of the world’s leading airlines (primarily international).

Sami Grisafe  
*QUARTERBACK, CHICAGO FORCE*

Sami Grisafe defies convention. When she’s not competing in marathons and recently modeled in a fashion show to help Shriners raise money for an E250 Extended Ford Van with a rear wheelchair lift.

Noor Raheemullah Hasan  
*FOUNDER/MEMBER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MUSLIM WOMEN’S ALLIANCE*

Volunteering has always been an important part of Noor Raheemullah Hasan’s life, and she fulfills her innate sense of duty by helping Muslim women reach their potential and strengthen community bonds by uniting women of all faiths. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Hasan has played a key role in organizing one of the largest annual Muslim women luncheons to recognize leaders in Chicago.

Karen Hawkins  
*COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)*

Prior to joining DCFS, Karen Hawkins was a general assignment reporter with the Associated Press, as well as a copy editor, proofreader, and independent publishing organizer. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Hawkins’ desire to find a work-life balance led her to establish Rebellious Magazine for Women, which examined feminism in and out of the workplace.

Rox Isailo, PhD  
*STUDENT ADVISOR, MOTHER MCAULEY LIBERAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL*

An educator for over 25 years, Dr. Rox Isailo teaches at the country’s largest, all-girls Catholic high school, which is based in Chicago. Why She’s Inspiring: Dr. Rox moderates the EcoMacs club. In 2010, they built a biodiesel processor for a school in Pichon, Haiti, after the devastating earthquake. The club continues to do amazing work with biodiesel fuel under Dr. Rox’s guidance.

Toni Irving, PhD  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GET IN CHICAGO*

Dr. Toni Irving is the former deputy chief of staff and senior advisor to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, where she oversaw policy and planning for public safety and human services agencies. Why She’s Inspiring: Dr. Irving received the MacArthur Foundation’s “Champion for Change” award in 2011 and continues her mission to improve life for at-risk youth in Chicago’s violence-stricken communities.

Justine D. Jentes  
*COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, EXCELLED*

Justine D. Jentes manages Excelled’s employee giving and volunteer program, provides counsel on community relations activities and participates in the company’s grantmaking. Why She’s Inspiring: In addition to her day job, Ms. Jentes found time to join the Woman’s Board of The Art Institute of Chicago and sit on the boards of The Arts Club of Chicago and Hyde Park Art Center.

Bonnie Krueger-Spurlock  
*EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, ASSOCIATED PUBLICATIONS, INC.*

Bonnie Krueger-Spurlock recently celebrated major anniversaries of the publications she co-founded with her husband, James: Sophisticate’s Black Book (25th anniversary) and Sophisticate’s Hairstyle Guide (30). Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Krueger-Spurlock is a devoted supporter of PAWS Chicago, single-handedly raising thousands of dollars for the no-kill shelter, volunteering her time at many events and making countless shelter visits to care for the animals.

Justine D. Jentes  
*COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, EXCELLED*

Justine D. Jentes manages Excelled’s employee giving and volunteer program, provides counsel on community relations activities and participates in the company’s grantmaking. Why She’s Inspiring: In addition to her day job, Ms. Jentes found time to join the Woman’s Board of The Art Institute of Chicago and sit on the boards of The Arts Club of Chicago and Hyde Park Art Center.

Dana Kurtz  
*PRESIDENT/OWNER, KURTZ LAW OFFICE*

Dana Kurtz used her own personal tragedy of being sexually assaulted in college to chart her career course as a fighter for victims of abuse, sexual harassment, discrimination and violence, founding an all-female law firm in Chicago. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Kurtz not only works tirelessly for her firm, but she does pro bono work on behalf of battered women, Native Americans and female police officers.

Missy Lavender  
*FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WOMEN’S HEALTH FOUNDATION*

Missy Lavender is a former executive in investment management, investor relations and real estate banking. In addition to earning an MBA from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, she is also a yoga instructor. Why She’s Inspiring: In an effort to improve petitive health and wellness for women and girls, Ms. Lavender founded the Women’s Health Foundation in 2004.

Lin Batsheva Kahn  
*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER, TIKVAH COMPANY OF ARTISTS*

An award-winning dance artist and educator, Lin Batsheva Kahn is an adjunct professor at DePaul University who has created and teaches several works. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Kahn has received numerous honors, including the 2014 Jewish Chicagoan of the Year. But for her it’s all about the students. She makes them feel as if what they contribute to class is important and remarkable.

Shermin Kruse  
*PARTNER, BARACK FERRAZZANO*

Sherin Kruse wears many hats: attorney, mother, painter, model, photographer and human rights advocate. Why She’s Inspiring: Having grown up in Iran, Ms. Kruse uses her issues and experiences born both in the U.S. and abroad. Her debut novel, *Butterfly Stitching*, is a gripping tale of oppression and redemption, obsession and love, and loss and authenticity.

Diane Latiker  
*FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIDS OFF THE BLOCK*

In 2003, Roseland native Diane Latiker opened an award-winning non-profit that supports youth in underserved communities by focusing on academics, recreation, health, violence prevention, family planning and career education. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Latiker was named one of CNN’s Top 10 Heroes in 2011, and she received this year’s Chicago Defender Women of Excellence Award.

Joan Kahn  
*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, STEPPENWOLF THEATRE COMPANY*

Martha Lavey earned a doctorate in theatre and founded Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 1988. She has served as artistic director at Steppenwolf since 1995, appearing in 22 productions and over 1200 performances. Why She’s Inspiring: In an effort to improve petitive health and wellness for women and girls, Ms. Lavender founded the Women’s Health Foundation in 2004.

Lisa Janek  
*PARTNER, BDO*

With nearly 25 years of experience in accounting and business consulting, Lisa Janek is an industry expert who has been instrumental with mergers and acquisitions as well as coordinating clients’ international financial audits and compliance services. Why She’s Inspiring: Ms. Janek leads BDO’s Initiative and Flex strategies, which focus on women’s networking and career development.
They are inspired by the women they feature and strive to make a positive impact in their communities. Each woman's story is unique, and they are all driven by a desire to make the world a better place. Whether it’s through legal advocacy, scientific innovation, or business leadership, these women are making a difference in their fields.

Josephine Lee
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT, CHICAGO CHILDREN’S CHOIR

Through her vision and leadership, Josephine Lee has transformed the Chicago Children’s Choir into the cultural icon that it is today. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: In 2006, Ms. Lee was named Chicagoan of the Year in the Arts and was honored as a Distinguished Musician by the Union League Club of Chicago the following year.

Marybeth Lernihan
CO-FOUNDER, IMPACT 100 CHICAGO

Marybeth Lernihan co-founded a women’s collective grant-making organization. For every 100 women who join and make a $1,000 tax-deductible donation, the organization awards a $500,000 grant to a local non-profit. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Lernihan has overseen Impact 100 to acquire over 365 members, expand two chapters in the Chicago area and award over $888,000 to local non-profits since its founding in 2010.

Jackie Lomax
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GIRLS 4 SCIENCE

Jackie Lomax founded a science program for girls ages 10 to 18 that currently operates a quarterly, six-week Saturday Science Academy at three colleges. Over 700 girls have participated in free STEM programs since the organization’s inception in 2009. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Lomax created the only all-girls science initiative for minority girls in Chicago simply from her daughter’s expressed interest in the subject.

Lisa Madigan
ATTORNEY GENERAL, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Lisa Madigan was elected to a third term as attorney general in 2010, and she’s the senior most female attorney general in the country. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Attorney General Madigan has championed tougher sanctions against sexual predators and stronger laws to protect women and children from domestic violence, including legislation that made Illinois the first state to mandate the testing of sexual assault evidence.

Stacie McClane, MD, FACS
PLASTIC SURGEON, CHICAGO PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER, LLC

Dr. Stacie McClane is a board certified surgeon specializing in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Dr. McClane founded the Faces for Love non-profit in 2012, whose mission is to help women and children in distressed situations by improving their circumstances when challenged by life events. She holds the annual Tea for Tots event to raise awareness and collect toys for young children.

Sylvie Légère
CO-OWNER, HIGHER GEAR

Sylvie Légère and her husband, Todd Ricketts, are avid cyclists. She shares her passion for cycling with other Chicago area women by organizing the annual Women’s Cycling Clinic riding program to promote a more active lifestyle. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Légère and her husband take their enthusiasm for cycling to another level, raising money for Cubs Charities and World Bicycle Relief.

Connie Lindsey
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/HEAD OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND GLOBAL DIVERSITY & INCLUSION, NOTOVA

Connie Lindsey is responsible for the design, implementation and development of goals, policies and programs appropriate to Northern Trust. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Lindsey provides oversight and leadership to the firm’s response to environmental matters and social issues within the marketplace, workplace and community. She is a revered speaker at many events and organizations around Chicago.

Ann Lurie
PRESIDENT/TREASURER, ANN & ROBERT H. LURIE FOUNDATION

In 2007, philanthropist Ann Lurie pledged $100 million to Children’s Memorial Hospital to build Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, which was completed in 2012. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Following the death of her husband in 1990, Ms. Lurie devoted herself to philanthropy, funding numerous initiatives in health care, education, social services and the arts, both domestically and on a global scale.

Celestia L. Mays
PRINCIPAL, CELESTIA L. MAYS PC

Celestia Mays Law is primarily concentrated on the areas of family law and probate matters. She is also deputy regional director for Region VII of the National Bar Association. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: As first vice president of the Cook County Bar Association, Ms. Mays has received numerous awards for her work including the Presidential Award and Meritorious Service Award.

Cari Meyers
FOUNDER, THE PUPPY MILL PROJECT

Cari Meyers has worked tirelessly to help put an end to puppy mill cruelty and the horrifying abuse puppy mill dogs endure. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Meyers’ work has influenced public law, including the recent ordinance that bans all cook county pet stores unless they’re obtained from shelters, non-profit rescue, humane societies, veterinarians or government shelters.

Goldie Wolfe Miller
PRESIDENT, MILLBROOK CORPORATE REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Goldie Wolfe Miller is known as one of the top commercial real estate brokers, having sold her own firm to the New York Stock Exchange. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Miller began The Goldie Wolfe Miller Women Leaders in Real Estate Initiative at Roosevelt University in 2007, aiming to prepare women for the commercial real estate industry through mentorship, scholarship and networking.

Nina Nashif
FOUNDER/CEO, HEALTHBOX

Nina Nashif’s career in healthcare and entrepreneurship has spanned 15 years in over 30 countries. She worked as a consultant to the Health Authority of Abu Dhabi, co-founded a New York-based Turkish cotton textile and launched the U.K. office of healthcare analytics firm Sgs. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: With a passion for improving the future of healthcare, Ms. Nashif is building a global community that advances technology in healthcare.

Susan Nussbaum
PLAYWRIGHT/AUTHOR/DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

An award-winning and critically acclaimed author and playwright, Susan Nussbaum brings disability issues to the forefront through her books, talks, and film. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Nussbaum’s work has appeared on-stage at Second City, Victory Gardens and Live Bait Theaters. She also founded the Empowered Fe Fes, a support, sexuality and disability identity group that has served over 300 girls.

Connie Pearson
FOUNDER/CEO, CHERISHING HER CLIMATE

Judy Pearson is an author, a freelance writer and the founder of Courage Concepts, a company that cultivates courage in women and girls through education and motivation. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Pearson is passionate about supporting other survivors through the Women Survivors Alliance, as many may still feel lost, scared and alone once they’re in recovery.

Toni Preckwinkle
BOARD PRESIDENT, COOK COUNTY

Toni Preckwinkle has been a dedicated community leader for over two decades, working with county employees to implement major reform and real-estate county government into a world-class institution. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: President Preckwinkle eliminated the percent sales tax of her predecessor, raising County spending $1.2 billion. She has also cut $430 million in expenditures, passed four budgets and established a more transparent budget process.

Elana Dikaitis Morgan
FOUNDER, WAR DOGS MAKING IT HOME

Elana Dikaitis Morgan opened her namesake dog training and boarding facility, Morgan’s Dogs, nearly 30 years ago in the Roscoe Village neighborhood. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: In 2010, Ms. Morgan co-founded War Dogs Making It Home, a non-profit that rescues dogs from death row (high-kill shelters) and trains them to become service dogs for veterans with PTSD/TBI. This two-year program involves twice weekly training and support for both the dog and veteran.

Caralynn Nowinski, MD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO, UI LABS

In addition to being a physician, Dr. Caralynn Nowinski is an entrepreneur and a venture capitalist. Prior to overseeing research and commercialization collaborations at UI Labs, she co-founded biotechnology company SanuGene Therapeutics while earning her medical and master’s degrees. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Dr. Nowinski is a Governor-appointed member of the Illinois Innovation Council and currently serves as a member of Mayor Emanuel’s ChicagoNEXT Council on Innovation and Technology.

Kristie Paskvan
CFO, MESIROW FINANCIAL

Kristie Paskvan joined Mesirow in 1997 and was there through the acquisition of Stein & Company. She’s responsible for the company’s financial plans, acquisition analysis, capital usages, risk management and business profitability. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Paskvan was named CFO of the Year in 2012 by the Chicago chapter of Financial Executives International. She also works as a mentor in the New Leaders Circle Membership Program.

Anne Pramaggiore
PRESIDENT/CEO, COMED

Anne Pramaggiore was promoted to her current position at ComEd in 2012 and is the first woman to hold the position at the electric utility. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Pramaggiore supports many ComEd-sponsored programs like the Ice Box Derby Project, which brings together female students with an interest in STEM and ComEd’s own engineers to build electric cars out of recycled refrigerators.

Elana Dikaitis Morgan
FOUNDER, WAR DOGS MAKING IT HOME

Elana Dikaitis Morgan opened her namesake dog training and boarding facility, Morgan’s Dogs, nearly 30 years ago in the Roscoe Village neighborhood. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: In 2010, Ms. Morgan co-founded War Dogs Making It Home, a non-profit that rescues dogs from death row (high-kill shelters) and trains them to become service dogs for veterans with PTSD/TBI. This two-year program involves twice weekly training and support for both the dog and veteran.
Julyann Richardson  
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE HISTORYMAKERS  
A woman of inspiration who has dedicated her life to the study and preservation of African-American history. She is the founder and executive director of The HistoryMakers, an organization that collects oral histories, biographical records, and personal papers of African Americans. She has interviewed thousands of individuals and has contributed to the creation of over 6,000 oral histories and 200,000 biographies. Her work has been featured in various publications and on television and radio. She has received numerous awards and honors for her contributions to the field of African-American history.

Eve Rogers  
DIRECTOR OF CHICAGO OPERATIONS, GRAFF DIAMONDS  
Before joining Graff, Eve Rogers was president of Eve Rogers Fine and Rare Jewels and vice president/director of international jewels for Sotheby's in the Midwest. She has a degree in gemology and is a seasoned jeweler and auctioneer. She has held positions in several Galleries and is the senior regional specialist and auctioneer at Graff. Her work has attracted over 7,000 participants and garnered support from over 50 countries.

Anne Sweeney  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CO-FOUNDER, HESHIMA KENYA  
In 2007, Anne Sweeney co-founded a leading girls and women's rights non-governmental organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. WHY SHE'S INSPIRING: With headquarters in Chicago, Sweeney works tirelessly to prepare and empower refugee girls and young women who have been separated from their families and displaced by conflict in Somalia, Ethiopia, DR Congo and Southern Sudan.

Scheherazade Tillet  
CO-FOUNDER, THE LYNN SAGE FOUNDATION  
Scheherazade Tillet's artistic influence is evident in her work. She is an artist and a philanthropist, and her foundation, the Lynn Sage Foundation, is dedicated to supporting women's rights and girls' education. She was inspired to create the foundation in memory of her mother, Lynn, who passed away in 2002.

Donnita Travis  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BY THE HAND CLUB  
Thirteen years ago, Donnita Travis saw kids in Cabrini-Green fail in school, get in trouble and have no place to go after school. She then quit her job as president of a successful advertising agency to give kids a place to find real purpose.

Laura Van Zeyl  
PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, DESIGN GROUP AT SCRANTON GILLETTE COMMUNICATIONS  
Laura Van Zeyl oversees sales and content for magazine, digital communications, events, custom solutions and social media pages in the home furnishings and interior design industries. WHY SHE'S INSPIRING: Ms. Van Zeyl is devoted to serving on the board of The H Foundation, a cancer charity that has raised over $5 million dollars for the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University.

Bernarda Wong  
FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, CHINESE AMERICAN SERVICE LEAGUE  
Bernarda Wong is a leader in the Asian community, having chaired the Advisory Council on Asian American Affairs under mayors Harold Washington and Richard M. Daley. WHY SHE'S INSPIRING: She was the first Asian appointed to the boards of United Way of Chicago and the Chicago Public Library, and the Chinese American Service League has grown from a one-person operation in 1978 to a major organization under her leadership.