



**For Immediate Release**

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**FUTURIST, EDIE WEINER, SPEAKS ON CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN  
IN SENIOR POSITIONS AT THE CHICAGO NETWORK LUNCHEON**

*Leading by Example: Women & Diversity Take on the Future*

Chicago, April 10—Edie Weiner, President, Weiner, Edrich, Brown, Inc., today told a sold out audience of more than 1,000 corporate and civic leaders in Chicago that men and women must throw off old assumptions and stereotypes to build stronger organizations and a more just society. “Men and women have different views – that is the point of diversity, that is good,” Weiner said. If the present is about women “fighting very hard for a seat at the table” of influence, Weiner added, the future is about “women being allowed to take the challenge to change the table.”

Speaking at the nineteenth annual Chicago Network’s *Women in the Forefront* luncheon, which also featured Mayor Richard M. Daley, Weiner stressed that business leaders of both genders need to strike a balance between such “male” concerns as transportation and communication infrastructure and capital formation and the “female” interests of health, education, and ecological integrity. Citing her own experience working with clients – including those in the corporate, government, and academic worlds – she said future success also will be driven by an appreciation of the importance of “non-tangible items on the balance sheet – morale, intellectual property, intelligence, stress, and joy.”

In his comments at the luncheon, Mayor Daley thanked The Chicago Network for its “wonderful contribution to the entire city of Chicago” and urged the organization to take on important social issues such as education and protection of children against violence. “This what The Chicago Network is all about – not just getting more women involved in business, but also in the quality of life of the city,” the Mayor said.

Weiner has been a pacesetter for women throughout her career. She was the youngest outside woman ever elected to the board of directors of a major financial institution when she joined the board of Union Mutual Life Insurance Company (now UNUM Provident Corporation) at the age of 29. She and her firm have served over 300 clients in identifying opportunities in the areas of marketing, product development, strategic planning, investments, human resources, public affairs, and advertising. “Eddie Weiner is a wonderful role model for women today,” said Amy Osler, executive director of The Chicago Network. “She’s a dynamic thinker who has helped to illuminate many of these issues for large numbers of women *and* men.”

The *Women in the Forefront* luncheon is a signature event of The Chicago Network, a group of more than 370 leading Chicago area women executives committed to the success and advancement of women. For the past 10 years, The Chicago Network, in its annual Census Report, has tracked the progress of women in director and executive positions at Chicago’s largest 50 public companies and, for the past two years, at leading non-profits. Citing results of the most recent Census, titled “Women Mean Business,” Pamela Forbes Lieberman, Census chair, noted gains across the board for both public companies and non-profits. Still, she said, “the pace and progress clearly have not been at the level we’d like to see.” Noting the business case for increasing diversity “is clear,” Lieberman said, “I’d like to believe, as would my fellow Chicago Network members, that companies will develop and promote their most capable people, a large number of whom are women.”

The Chicago Network encourages civic and commercial leaders to read the latest Census Report (also available at [www.thechicagonetwork.org](http://www.thechicagonetwork.org)) and to continue to push for more opportunities for women.

Since 1989, The Chicago Network has hosted the *Women in the Forefront* luncheon to honor the leadership role of women. The 2008 Luncheon’s Platinum Sponsor was Allstate. Gold sponsors included: Abbott, Alberto-Culver, AT&T, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Deloitte & Touche USA LLP, Ernst & Young, Exelon Corporation, Harris, Huron Consulting, ITW, KPMG LLP, Peoples Energy, Perkins-Will | Eva Maddox Branded Environments, and Sara Lee Corporation.

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The Chicago Network is an organization of metropolitan Chicago's most distinguished professional women. Now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year, the Network is committed to the success and advancement of women. Its more than 370 members have leading roles in academia, the arts, corporations, entrepreneurial enterprises, government, law, health, science and medicine, not-for-profits, politics and professional service firms.