

SMALL BUSINESS PERSON

of the Year KATHERINE SIMONS

Sees *Big* Picture, Generates *Big* Results

There's nothing small about Katherine Simons's vision, even though she's been named the Small Business Person of the Year by the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce. In fact, "Think Big" could have been Katherine's motto from the day she started her dental/medical staffing business 21 years ago.

In 1981, as a mother of two, working part-time as a dental hygienist, Simons saw a need for dentists to find qualified permanent staff and "save the day" staffing when short-handed. Taking a risk, she quit her job and spent six months studying the staffing industry. On June 1, 1984, her first temp went out to a dental office in Roswell. "I sat there all day and bit my nails, hoping that the dentist would be pleased and the hygienist would work out," says Simons.

Today, that same dentist is still a client and he's been joined by thousands of others in Greater Atlanta and 10 other states. DDS Staffing Resources, Inc. is now an extremely successful business employing 28 people. In 1991, the company expanded to include medical staffing, and has recently taken on contracts with large national companies and government agencies. The company survived a devastating industry downturn two years ago, and came back with record 33 percent growth in the past year by focusing on both proven and new market strategies.

Through it all, Simons has maintained a vision that would do credit to a Fortune 500 company president. "One of the first things I did was to join the Chamber of Commerce. Being active in the Chamber was extremely important to me, as was having the support of other community business people like myself." Simons is also a member of The Alternative Board, a group of 11 presidents of similar-sized companies who share challenges with each other—"One of the best decisions I have ever made." She is Past President of



the Georgia Association of Personnel Services, Ethics Committee Chair of the National Association, and active supporter of numerous dental and medical groups.

On the hometown level, Simons's focus on giving back is exemplary. Last year, an idea shared at her church sparked a commitment from DDS to pledge 14 *paid hours* per employee annually in community service. "It's good for employees, particularly young people, to have the experience of being a volunteer. We go out each Wednesday afternoon to North Fulton Community Charities and do whatever is needed—fold clothes, move furniture—it's amazing to see all of the people who are served there."

Teamwork is critical to the success of DDS Staffing Resources, and that's evident when Simons insists that credit be shared. "My right arm is Executive Vice President Michelle Lee, who has been with me for 18 years," says Simons. The executive management team also includes Business Office Manager Kathy Brown and Office Manager Cathi Jackson, along with son-in-law and Vice President of New Business Development Tim Rush, and the most recent team member—Simons's husband Craig (who joined DDS three years ago as vice president and chief operating officer).

For the future, the team is focused on growing each of the company's new business initiatives. "This past year has been an exciting one," says Simons, referring to the company's phenomenal growth and entry into new markets. "Our company had to 'hold on to its hat' as the firm took off to explore uncharted territories, and the ride is far from being over!"

The Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce is the catalyst for economic development, business growth and quality of life in North Fulton. For more information about the Chamber, call 770-993-8806 or stop by the Chamber's new office in Alpharetta, located at Northwinds Four, 11605 Haynes Bridge Road, Suite 100.

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SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

Reflect High Standards of Excellence

Judges for the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce had a tough job as they reviewed the lengthy submissions from nominees for the 2005 Small Business Person of the Year Award. Small Business Committee member Tim Gaffney says the process, which includes a personal interview, "celebrates the many well-rounded Chamber members who give back to our community." The winner was announced at the group's recent Eggs & Enterprise Breakfast, where accolades were also presented to these five finalists.



DON ALDRIDGE,
President and CEO, AmeriMex Communications

Aldridge, a CPA whose original career was in corporate finance, started the company in 1998 to provide prepaid residential telephone service to Georgia's Hispanic community. The culturally-sensitive business employs 45 people and now serves more than 20,000 homes in 10 states.



WILLIAM E. DAY, JR.,
President, North Ridge Restoration, LLC

Day, a veteran manager in the restoration industry, started the company in 2000 as a specialty general contractor for remediation of fire, water and mold damage. With 20 employees, the company services a variety of industrial, commercial and residential customers.



GARY FASCILLA,
President, Metro Directories

Fascilla started his first independent phone directory company in California in 1994 and brought the concept (which includes an ad tracking system) to Georgia in 1999. Now six editions, totaling two million copies, are distributed in Greater Atlanta, and the company employs 65 people.



ROGER SANTI,
President, Santi & Associates

Santi launched his company as a young CPA with just a few years of big firm experience, and now employs 19 people who serve closely held companies and high net worth individuals. He was recently appointed the North Fulton resident representative on the Atlanta Regional Commission.



JIMMY WALKER,
Chairman, President & CEO, North Atlanta National Bank

A successful career in commercial banking led Walker to community banking and the formation of the North Atlanta National Bank in 1998. Expertise in small business issues and personal service are the hallmarks of this highly regarded financial institution.