

## Women in Leadership Highlights March 25, 2011



### March 25: “Women & Girls: Bringing Our Best Game” featuring Kathy Betty, Owner/CEO, the Atlanta Dream.

Kathy is a prominent Atlanta business woman, sports advocate and widow of the former EarthLink CEO, Garry Betty. She's the first woman in Atlanta history to own a professional sports team. In addition to serving as the CEO of the Garry Betty Foundation, Kathy is a former partner with Ernst & Young and previously was EVP of Scott Madden, Inc., an Atlanta-based management consulting firm. She's also a major contributor to Georgia Tech's men's and women's basketball programs. Among many attributes that distinguish Kathy's leadership are her passion and commitment to making a difference in the lives of women

and girls. While securing financial support for her team and winning basketball games are important, Kathy believes that winning the game of life is even more important. For that, she personally sets a very high standard.

**NOTE:** In introducing Kathy for this seminar, it was said that she may be Alabama-born and raised, but she's now one of Georgia's treasures. She has also become one of the most sought-after speakers in the state and is a world-class leader who inspires everyone with whom she comes in contact. A few words to describe Kathy: courageous, caring, and a woman of great character.

### Experiences and Comments

Kathy shared her personal ups and downs, the decision to buy The Dream, and the role of sports in developing young girls into healthy, confident women who are ready to lead in business and in life.

- If we're going to change the world, women have got to lead in business, education, politics, government, and in all sectors of our society.
- When considering buying The Dream, she knew she would have to step out of her comfort zone (even more than she knew!). She's an entrepreneur, but this was different from anything she'd ever done and in the middle of a terrible economy. But in making the final decision, Kathy realized The Dream's forum was about much more than Basketball. It's a platform for:
  - Atlanta, the community, and giving back. She and the team – and as of 2011, her two co-owners (Mary Brock & Kelly Loeffler) – they all want to be a part of Atlanta!
  - Role Models

- Every team member has completed college and some are Olympians
- 10% are mothers
- The players are not only interested in being athletes but much more.
- Networking
- Someone said to Kathy, *“Do you live your life with fear or with faith?”* and that's when her heart kicked in. From that moment on, it was the best year of her life. She had a team with no employees, no practice facility, no coach, and no sponsors, and the first game was in 5 months! The prior year, the players and fans thought they were closing down. As women, we want to be 100% prepared (i.e., “perfect”), and she wasn't, but she had to do it anyway.
- For girls, playing sports is immensely important for their later health and success. Research shows:
  - 20% increase in high school and college graduation rates
  - 45% higher employment rate
  - 80% of Fortune 500 women executives played team sports growing up
  - Obesity is less likely
  - Being a victim of domestic violence is less likely
  - Sports teaches women how to win, how to lose, and how to be competitive and walk off the court friends.
- **Her motto: “Think Big, Start Small, Go Fast”**
- Sam Williams and Arthur Blank said to her, *“Kathy, you have to be a brand.”*
- When pitching to investors, she did not bother with the probable financial gains. She said don't buy in if you are not willing to lose. It was refreshing to many to hear.
- Kathy wants to “take the show on the road” to get fans excited about The Dream. They are already doing a lot and welcome “volunteers” and friends of The Dream to join in, help spread the word, etc. Some examples of current activities and plans:
  - Going to High Schools
  - A day with coaches
  - Starting young basketball leagues, 14 and under
  - Be Fit clinics for skill training
  - Increased merchandising, e.g., selling bracelets representing each member of the team as well as bobblehead dolls
  - **The new marketing campaign: “Run with the Dream”**
  - Letting people really get to know each player for who she is, her story, her strengths, her personal dreams (for Angel, Allison, Izi, etc.). This would also help to establish the team members as “stars” in their own right.

- Encouraging whole families (boys, girls, mothers, fathers, grandparents, etc.) to come to a game because once they come, they can't help but get excited!
  - Use of social media perhaps mobile apps
  - **In May, The Dream will play the first ever game in Europe, in Manchester, England to be exact. They were chosen from all the teams in the WNBA for this event.**
  - **The Atlanta Dream's first game of the 2011 season is June 5<sup>th</sup> against the NY Liberty. They will start the season as the defending Eastern Conference champs!**
- What people say about The Dream and professional girls basketball:
    - *"It's 4 full quarters; the way the game was meant to be played!"*
    - *"It's good for the community."*
    - *"It represents a vision of what Atlanta can be – for women and men, girls and boys."*
    - *"When young boys attend the games, it fosters a positive image of girls – as strong and confident."*