

# Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

As the year draws to a close, I wish you and those you care about health, safety, and opportunity.

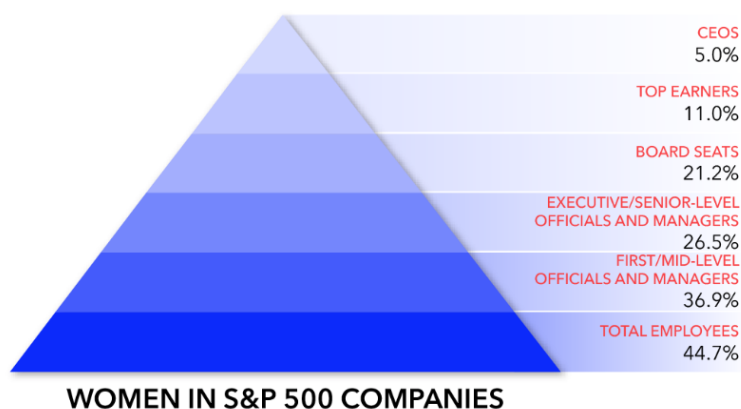
2019 was a year of revelation for me. I'm continuously awed by what I assumed but didn't really know about the world. It was also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my grandmother's death during the flu epidemic of 1918-19. My father, age 4, and his siblings, ages 2 and 6, were put in an orphanage where they stayed for the next 7 to 10 years. One outcome of that experience was a deep love of family, but family didn't mean blood relatives. Family is people who care about each other. BTW, our schools were integrated in 1959, about the time Eisenhower approved the development of our interstate highway system.



I hope 2020 encourages all of us to strive for a clearer vision about what is happening in the world.

I had the opportunity to hear Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, speak a few years back. She declared the 20th century as the century of the despot noting that much of the world had been at war for more than 100 years. She foresaw the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the century of the woman. It was 100 years ago women got the right to vote. It wasn't until 1974 women could have a credit card in their own name and in 2013 women could serve in combat.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is seeing some progress for women. According to the 2018 Digest of Education Statistics (2018), women earned more than half of bachelor's degrees (57.3%), master's degrees (59.4%), and doctorate degrees (53.3%) awarded for the class of 2016–2017. The Digest also reported among all racial/ethnic groups, women outperformed men at all degree levels in 2015–2016. This was especially noteworthy for Black women, who attained the lion's share of master's (70%) and doctor's (66%) degrees compared to Black men. In the same year (2015-2016), women earned just over half (50.7%) of all professional degrees; 49.6% of degrees in law (LLB or JD); and 47.4% of degrees in medicine (MD). Women have earned more bachelor's degrees than men since 1982, more master's degrees than men since 1987, and more doctorate degrees than men since 2006. Unfortunately, women are still less represented the higher up they go according to S&P 500 companies.

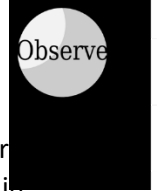


According to the Federal Government in 2018, \$20,212 is the official poverty level for a family with two adults and one child. 14% of the **non-elderly** women in the USA, excluding Puerto Rico, live in poverty. The number goes up to 43% for Puerto Rico. Women are the fastest growing segment of homeless veterans. In 2017 (HUD) estimated that just over 40,000 veterans were homeless. Of those, about 9% were women. The number of homeless female veterans

increased by 7%, compared with 1% for their male counterparts in 2017. Our very own Donna Crisp, ADM (ret) with the help of the DAR has taken on this challenge. Like her other past missions, such as recovering the remains of fallen comrades of WWII, Korea, and Nam, and restoring WWI memorials, I'm sure she and her team of women will make a difference.

It is hard for me to accept that the equal rights amendment is still one state short of being ratified. Perhaps this is the year equal rights will be formally ratified by the nation. I don't understand why anyone would be afraid of equal rights. It only seems natural that the world would be better for all if everyone had rights and opportunity. But, perhaps, that's the fear.

I attended the 2019 Holiday Showcase sponsored by the Association Forum, whose members include some 1700 professional and trade associations in the Chicagoland area. As a CEO member, I get the latest info on special initiatives, one of which is human trafficking. Human trafficking is defined as a severe form of exploitation for labor (including sex) using force, fraud, or coercion. According to the International Labor Organization, 40.3 million worldwide are trapped in modern slavery; 24.9M in forced labor; 1 in 4 are children.



It is big business. In 2014, the profit was estimated at \$150 billion, of which \$99 billion was from commercial sexual exploitation. In 2017, 24.9M people were victims; 64% for labor and 19% for sex. However, sexual exploitation earns 66% of global profits. Of the 24.9M people, 71% were women and 25% were under the age of 18. Among the most vulnerable are runaways, children in foster care, the poor, and the impoverished.

So, what about the US? According to the Dept of Health and Human Services and the Dept. of Justice, 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the US each year; 50% are children. 46% are forced into prostitution and 27% into domestic servitude. BTW, the National John Suppression Initiative operates in 27 states, 140 jurisdictions. Over 9,600 sex buyers have been arrested. Why not every state?

**So, what's with wanting clearer vision? The view looks bleak. Why not wear rose-colored glasses?**

I also had the opportunity to hear Shannon Huffman Polson, US Army Apache Helicopter Captain and Pilot; author of *North of Hope* and *The Grit Factor*. I found her message heartening,

*Turn the nose into the wind and let the resistance help you rise. Keep your eye on your target, never take your eyes off of it. Tune out the noise. Own everything you and others do. Decide to lead to make a difference.*

**So please join me in pushing away the fog, tuning out the noise, and getting a clearer vision. Let's face the world as it is and rise to the call for leadership and direction. Let's restore compassion, hope, fairness, accountability, and opportunity. We can make a difference.**

**IT'S PARTY TIME** I'm hosting a new year's gathering on Jan 18<sup>th</sup> starting at 5pm. Why the 18<sup>th</sup>? Well according to the Gregorian (Orthodox) calendar, the New Year begins on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>, and the Chinese New Year is the 25<sup>th</sup>. So, I aimed for something in between. If you are in the Chicago area, consider stopping by. From out of town? I still have a few beds available. It is a BYOB or dish. Do let me know if you can join me and to get directions – [Judy@HaleCenter.org](mailto:Judy@HaleCenter.org) or call 630-235-0195.

