

Community First

Honored for her volunteer work, entrepreneur Laurna Godwin hopes to engage St. Louis Woman Magazine readers

As a Girl Scout, Laurna Godwin honed her leadership skills and developed the poise to speak publicly. Now, a successful and confident business woman, she still holds sacred a commitment to community service — a belief the Girl Scouts not only practiced but also a core value her mother instilled in her.

“She was my role model from many different levels ... She was a volunteer extraordinaire till the day she died,” says Godwin, 49, chairwoman of the board of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri. Her mother served as chair of the regional counterpart in New Jersey where she grew up.

Godwin’s community-focused upbringing comes as no surprise to those who work with her at Vector Communications Corporation, the public engagement and communications consulting firm she co-founded in 1998. Godwin, who sits on numerous charitable boards, takes pride in creating a culture of philanthropy at the office, providing her staff one paid day a month to give back to the community.

“Laurna Godwin has tirelessly promoted the civic well-being of the St. Louis community for as long as I’ve known her,” says Rebeccah Bennett, senior consultant of public policy, planning and community engagement. “If there is a cause to be championed, an individual or group in need of support or money to be raised then she is the perfect go-to person.”

This month, Boys Hope Girls Hope of St. Louis will present Godwin with its inaugural Reflection of Hope Award named in honor of the agency’s founder, Father Paul Sheridan. The honor recognizes Godwin as a community leader who embodies the nonprofit’s mission of helping children in need fulfill their potential.

“Laurna is an empathetic leader with a commitment to service so deep that it’s cellular,” adds Bennett, who nominated Godwin for the award. “She employs compassion as frequently as her intellect, using both to advance positive change in the community.”

Godwin encourages other businesses to promote civic mindedness at the workplace. She believes it’s a cooperative approach that’s a win-win situation.

“I learn so much. I get to help other people the way I can help other people the best,” Godwin says. “I give my best, but I also get a lot out of it. And you meet people who have common interests and that’s wonderful.” Last month, she and her business partner, Jessica Perkins, were recognized as Entrepreneurs of the Year by the National Black MBA Association and Wells Fargo Bank.

“Their reputation precedes them,” says Paula Hughes, senior consultant of transportation. She recommended her bosses for the distinction. “I believe they deserved to be recognized for the depth



and quality of their work, the growth and accomplishments of the business, and their spirit of excellence.”

And it’s this deep-rooted passion that the publisher of *St. Louis Woman Magazine* hopes to tap into when Godwin joins the team as contributing publisher. From having graced the cover of the magazine to her new role helping shape the inside pages, the former Emmy Award-winning journalist will advise on content, promotions and head up the company’s advisory board.

“I see numerous opportunities ... to expose more people to our magazine and to really talk about the issues that affect women in the St. Louis area,” Godwin says. “Learning. Dialogue. Positive change. That’s what I’m about with my company. That’s what I’m about in my volunteer work. And that’s what I’m about with *St. Louis Woman Magazine*.” W