



Photo by Margie Ollver

Recipients of the 2008 Women of Distinction Award: Valerie Bell, attorney and public consultant; Jessica Perkins, co-founder and vice president of Vector Communications; Patricia Smith Thurman, vice president and group head of financial services development at MasterCard Worldwide; Captain Rochelle Denise Jones of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department; and Dr. Mary A.T. Tillman.

Women of distinction for 2008

By **Jessica Bassett**
Of the St. Louis American

"Receiving an award helps me understand I have hit a milestone, but also that I have more on my plate to savor," Jessica Perkins, co-founder and vice president of Vector Communications, said as she accepted her 2008 Women of

■ "Women of Distinction is our way of thanking amazing African-American women for blazing trails."

— **Tiffany Cooley,**
president
of POW

Distinction Award.

Perkins was one of five African-American women to receive Professional Organization of Women's top honor. The sixth annual awards ceremony was held in March at the Missouri History Museum in honor of Women's History Month. More than 100 people attended.

Valerie Bell, Captain Rochelle Denise Jones, Patricia Smith Thurman and Dr. Mary A.T. Tillman also received awards.

Recipients were honored for their professional accomplishments as well as their commitment to community service in the St. Louis region. They fully epitomize POW's mission to empower African-American women to

learn, lead and succeed.

Tiffany Cooley, president of POW, said the ceremony is important because it's rare for African-American women to be praised for their contributions.

"Women of Distinction is our way of thanking amazing African-American women for blazing trails, accomplishing the unthinkable, making dreams come true, making our

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