

## **A warm welcome to our 5<sup>th</sup> annual 'Top Women Awards**

**Ilse Pienaar, Associate Publisher TWBG**

It is an honour for me to be in your midst for the opening of the fifth annual Top Women Awards proudly brought to you by Top Women in Business and Government and Topco Media.

We're commemorating our fifth birthday this year and we would like to extend an invitation to you to join *Top Women* in recognising, rewarding and celebrating the success of our country's most successful gender empowered organisations and individuals.

### **CELEBRATING GENDER EMPOWERMENT through The Top Women Awards**

Each year *Top Women in Business & Government* and Topco Media, through the Top Woman Awards, recognises and honours the top gender empowered companies, organisations and those leaders who have contributed to the success of women in our country.

The **Top Women Awards** event is a product of the publication and the pinnacle of the annual publications' enterprise. It has become a prestigious and desirous award in the South African business community. Previous Awards winners include the Honourable Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi, Zarina Bassa, Gloria Serobe, Cheryl Carolus, only to name a few.

The objectives for the Awards Event remains constant – to honour demonstrated commitment and achievement, thus encouraging the highest standards of excellence in business. We thank our judges, Leanne Manas, Connie Nkosi, Cathy Motsisi and Kimberly Bolton for maintaining the highest standards and raising the bar once again this year.

The calibre of women represented, as well as their growth in their particular sectors, is extraordinary and exciting to celebrate.

To the representatives of the Top Gender Empowered organisations in the Private and Public Sector – your continued support over the past 5 years exemplifies your commitment to gender empowerment in levelling the playing fields in business and governmental organisations to ensure a more vibrant and all encompassing South African workforce.

To our finalist and winners, your deserved nomination is testament to the amazing work you have done in your personal and private capacities towards the growth and development of South Africa. You are an inspiration to all across our nation!

There are women, men and organisations who, day after day, quietly contribute to the development of gender empowerment in a very big way. These women and organisations may not be recognised on stage at our glamorous awards evening or any other, but their work - your work - has changed the lives of South Africans in a tremendous way across South Africa and the world. We thank you for this!

**TO CONCLUDE:** a Message from Paulo Coelho, well know author of the Alchemists. I believe he said it best.

#### **TO THE ONE**

To the one who understood her task and her purpose.

To the one who looked at the road ahead, and understood that it was a difficult journey.

To the one who did not make light of those difficulties,  
but, on the contrary, made them manifest and visible.

To the one who makes the lonely feel they are not alone,  
who satisfies those who hunger and thirst for justice, who makes the oppressor feel as bad as the oppressed.....

To the one who is here tonight, may she be one with all of us,  
may her example multiply, may she still have difficult days ahead,  
so that she can do whatever she needs to do,  
so that the next generations will not have to strive  
for what has already been accomplished.

And may she walk slowly,  
because her peace is the peace of change,  
and change, real change, always takes time.

Thank you and may you enjoy your evening

