



**Barbara Pritchard**  
**President, The Pritchard Group**

**2009 HBA Star Volunteer**  
**Comments: HBA Woman of the Year Award Luncheon May 7, 2009**

Thank you, Ceci.

It is profoundly humbling to be up here and I thank all of you who nominated me.

You know, we don't volunteer in the HBA for the recognition or because we don't already have enough to do. Who needs something else to do, or more responsibilities? Probably no one in this room.

We volunteer because we feel passionate about the HBA and what it stands for, which is to help each of us achieve our leadership goals and to be the best that we can be

I accept this award, but really on behalf of all HBA volunteers, not just me. This is a tribute to everyone who has volunteered and made this such a fabulous organization

Let me take a minute to congratulate Alex, whom I've known for many years. He embodies a warmth and enthusiasm you don't always see in presidents of large companies. So it's a real pleasure to share this dais with him

And Deborah Dunsire is someone the HBA knew would one day be a WOTY winner. She has been so generous of her time to the HBA and I love the message you'll hear from her today.

Congratulations also to all the Rising Stars. May this day serve as an inspiration to you to reach for your future potential and to achieve your own leadership legacy.

You know, you have to push yourself if you want to excel in life, if you want to be a leader.

Sure, if you are really smart and in the right place and lucky, things do come your way. But this is a tough world and it's getting more competitive.

I led a workshop about cultivating and leveraging advocates at our European chapter's conference in Zurich. I mentioned that you need opportunities to show your stuff – to shine – and that those opportunities don't always come within the confines of your job.

Volunteering is one of the best ways to not only test your skills as a leader of a committee or just as a team player, but an excellent way to be observed and taken note of.

What's important if you volunteer is to be known as someone people can count on, to be known as someone who is collaborative and to be authentic and recognized for your integrity.

I believe that you need to approach volunteering with a commitment just like you make a commitment to your job. Both should be part of your leadership agenda. After all, it is only when you do something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential.

Why did I start volunteering? Initially, I think it was a feeling of responsibility to give back to several healthcare associations that were directly involved with my work as an officer of what was then the largest U.S. medical publishing company.

Quite honestly, while I had been a member of the HBA since almost the beginning, I wasn't particularly active. The HBA approached me in the '90s to be on the board, because they had seen the board roles I had played with the other organizations. (See, volunteering in those got me the recognition.) I agreed to come on in a new second vice president role, but with absolutely, seriously no idea that they wanted to groom me to be president.

Something happened once I got involved. All I can say is that the HBA gets in your blood.

- It's absolutely engaging.
- It's so enriching, so rewarding.
- It's contagious.
- You feel energized.

- And because it's all about supporting each other, it becomes like a family.

I entered the work force in the 1970s and women weren't always so generous with their time. A lot of women who advanced were pretty aggressive and out for themselves.

I invited someone here today who made me see how supportive women leaders can be. When I arrived here from journalism school, I had lunch with one of Columbia University's renowned graduates, Carol Loomis. She was the 1<sup>st</sup> woman on the *Fortune* magazine Board of Editors. Touted as a legend in financial journalism, she was and is one of the most respected business writers. Her friendly welcome to me and her openness so impressed and inspired me, that I knew I wanted to be that kind of woman leader.

And it's in the HBA that I've found that same openness and willingness to help each other. The HBA is made up of compassionate, committed women.

As I was preparing this speech, I, of course, tried to think of the benefits of volunteering, why we volunteer, what it means, who does it help and why is it so valuable?

- When you are younger, I think volunteering broadens your perspective. It allows you to test leadership skills that, maybe, you haven't yet gotten in your job. You observe different ways of solving problems, different corporate cultures. And you connect to people you might otherwise never meet; maybe ones that will become your advocates.
- When you achieve corporate management positions, you volunteer because you can really help women by being a role model and a mentor. You are never too important, even in that corner office, to stop volunteering or stop learning, which is something that you continuously benefit from when you volunteer. Look at some of the past WOTY winners. Many are here today and they still give their time to the HBA.

I volunteer – partly selfishly because I want to stay connected, to know what is happening in our industry – but mostly to encourage and support women in their endeavors and to make sure that there are limitless opportunities for our children, for young girls like my five step-granddaughters, including Eliza here today, so they can be whatever they want to be in life.

On a very personal note, I lost my brother to suicide last fall and in addition to my husband, family and close friends, it was the HBA that helped pull me through with incredible support, warmth and caring. These are the sorts of immeasurable benefits that volunteer work can bring. I really appreciated that.

In closing, let me encourage those of you who don't volunteer to think about the value volunteering can bring to you. And to those who do volunteer, I hope that you continue to commit yourself to volunteering. Take advantage of the opportunity to volunteer even if it isn't the best time. It's a gift to yourself and a concrete way to make a difference.

Some of you may be familiar with a poem titled "When I am an old woman I shall wear purple." Written in the '60s, it has become a great statement about growing old in a wonderfully outrageous style. The message and the message to all of you is to enjoy life. Have the confidence in yourself to be who you are.

And for me, of course I will wear purple – the HBA color – and I will always be supportive of this organization and look on with pleasure as it grows and brings so much to women in this industry.

Thank you.

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