

## Engaging Minds, Hearts & Spirits

It was a difficult task to narrow the pool of extraordinary women in Georgia to come up with a short list for this year's annual *Business to Business Divas* issue. On the following pages, we profile 15 exceptional women making an impact within the businesses they lead and in the communities in which they live — and their impact often has repercussions that extend far beyond the region and around the globe (see our cover story on page 28).

From an attorney who made her first professional court appearance as a pre-teen to the lead singer of a '60s-era rock band that once appeared on *American Bandstand* and produced two Top 10 hits to the woman charged with updating the C-5 cargo planes to ensure our troops in Iraq and around the world receive the Apache helicopters, Patriot missiles, tanks and other supplies they need, these highly accomplished women are unique, to say the least, but they do share some similar traits. They are all enthusiastic about what they do, optimistic about the future and unafraid to take a risk.

In "Thinking for a Living" (see page 14), columnist Joey Reiman applauds these personality traits as heroic, insisting "the Safeway is a grocery store." And in our book reviews section (see page 60),

David Ryback introduces us to *The Art of Winning Commitment: 10 Ways Leaders Can Engage Minds, Hearts, and Spirits*.

Another group of local leaders looking to engage the hearts, minds and spirits of Atlantans are the Buckhead Coalition's Sam Massell, A.J. Robinson of Central Atlanta Progress and Susan Mendheim of Midtown Alliance. Together, the triumvirate shared their insights and vision with us at *Business to Business's* inaugural "City of the Future" town hall meeting last month.

In this introductory meeting, they discussed their respective and collective plans for the strategic growth of this city, along with the challenges they face in gaining support and consensus to move beyond the planning stages and into implementation. While much has been done, it is clear we still have a long way to go, but optimism abounds. Look for periodic "City of the Future" town hall meetings to focus on a variety of the city's biggest challenges (read: opportunities), including arts and culture, economic development, education, the environment and land use, as well as transportation.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of *Business to Business*, and I welcome your comments and suggestions.



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PS – Please join us July 15th for the *Business to Business Women's Leadership Executive Breakfast* and again on July 28th for our annual *Business to Business Divas Luncheon* at the Atlanta History Center. For more information and to register, visit [www.btobmagazine.com](http://www.btobmagazine.com).

# DIVAS 2004

*by Tom Barry and Jacqueline Parker*

Opera has given the world many distinguished divas. Life reflects art. Our 15 divas guide large business enterprises in Atlanta or head nonprofit groups that make society a more caring and compassionate place. Our talented divas have many stories to tell. Some have taken a straight path to the top. Others have followed diverse roads. All are making significant marks on Atlanta. All continue to shape our city.

Photography by Davies & Lawery, Hair and Makeup by Jacques Carder Jensen and Sheryl Scott Twitty.  
Backdrop (Egyptian Oushak Rug) provided by Moattar Ltd.



Jeanine Chambers believes in signs. Some things are simply meant to be.

Chambers was a volunteer for Angel Flight of Georgia when she took the vacant executive director post, intending only to remain for six months, until she received her MBA from Georgia State University. However, at the end of her first day on the job, she received a chilling telephone call, one forever etched in her memory. Her 31-year-old brother had died of a heart attack.

"Had he not been alone at the time, he could have been saved," says Chambers. "I felt that if I could help others in this world, it

would somehow make things OK. It's like God put me where I needed to be."

Based at DeKalb Peachtree Airport, Angel Flight of Georgia provides free air transportation to and from medical facilities for those in need (or unable to use standard means). Pilots donate their time and aircraft, ferrying patients from points in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, the Carolinas and Tennessee.

"A flight can make the difference between someone getting life-saving treatment and not," says Chambers. "We help people just like you and me. Maybe they have a child who's been sick for several years and no longer have financial resources to fall back on."

Chambers' three-person staff includes her mother, Bernadette Darnell, who coordinates pilot schedules. "I'm surrounded by the most compassionate and giving people in the world, and that's a blessing to me," she says.

Founded by Jim Shafer in 1983, Angel Flight struggled after his death in 1995. But Chambers has breathed new life into the nonprofit, building grassroots support and boosting its profile.

Since she took over in 1999, the number of annual flights has soared from 200 to 1,200. There are more than 600 volunteer pilots today, four times the number in 1999. Earth Angels — the on-the-ground volunteers — have increased eight-fold, to around 400.

A native Atlantan who grew up three miles from the airport, Chambers also is overseeing the construction of the state's first aviation park. The \$1 million-plus project will include

## JEANINE CHAMBERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANGEL FLIGHT OF GEORGIA

playground and educational facility described in DeKalb Peachtree's rich history.

Chambers plans to marry this fall. She met her fiancé, Roland Biron, while manning the Angel Flight booth at a local event. "Just another sign that I was meant to be here," she says. ●