

MARCH[®]

INFORMING AND INSPIRING FEMALE EXECUTIVES

VOL. 2, NO. 4 MARCH/APRIL 2011

EARN MORE, SAVE BETTER.

Katie Dunsworth,
financial expert and
cofounder of the
Smart Cookies, talks
big money. **p.57**

PLUS

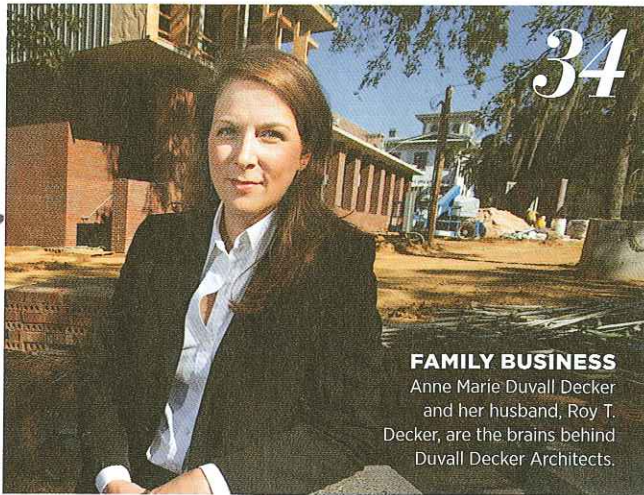
OPRAH WINFREY.
NANCY PELOSI.
TORY BURCH.
We pay homage
to the world's
most powerful
women. **p.15**

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Partner & Creative Director,
Marcus Thomas

BREAKING INTO THE BOYS' CLUB

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women who break the mold. **p.42**





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Anne Marie Duvall Decker and her husband, Roy T. Decker, are the brains behind Duvall Decker Architects.



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LET THERE BE LIGHT

Joan Krevlin designed this brightly lit addition to a Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn, NY.



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Kerry Parker studied journalism; today, she manages professional associations.

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“It took courage and guts. And I do have talent.”

Katie Berg, “Flying Solo,” p.68

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Kerry Parker, a principal at Holland-Parlette Associates, says her past experiences help her to better serve the nonprofits she partners with today

VERY VERSATILE Parker studied journalism and public administration; today, her firm manages professional associations. Photo: Dave Bush

PARTNERING UP

Kerry Parker, a principal at Holland-Parlette Associates, says her past experiences help her to better serve the nonprofits she partners with today

WHEN KERRY PARKER GRADUATED from the University of Iowa with a bachelor's degree in journalism, little did she know that 25 years later, she'd be managing associations and forging professional partnerships with some of the country's top physicians, lawyers, and engineers. Parker's journalistic eye for detail, knack for public speaking, and organizational skills have led to an unexpected career as coprincipal of Holland-Parlette Associates, a firm that directs and manages other associations.

"Everyday, I use every one of my skills—whether it's writing a petition for lobbyists, training staff, or making sure events are produced prop-

erly," says Parker, who also boasts a master's degree in public administration. "But it's the essence of partnership that makes my career so exciting."

Partnerships come naturally to Parker (she's been married for 30 years), but the decision to take partial ownership of Holland-Parlette wasn't so easy. When

Carol Holland-Parlette, the company's original owner, proposed the idea, the then-28-year-old Parker balked. "I wasn't sure I wanted to worry about meeting payroll or having the burden of a business on my shoulders," she says.

Instead, Parker chose just to work for Parlette. She quickly grasped the potential of the association-management business model, though, and it was only eight months later (when she was also eight months pregnant) that she decided to take the leap into partnership.

Today, along with Kent Lindeman, CMP, who became HPA's co-principal

PARKER'S PATH TO THE TOP

1981

Parker graduates with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Iowa.

1985

Parker earns her Master's degree in Public Administration from Iowa State University. Meanwhile, Carol Holland-Parlette founds Holland-Parlette Associates (HPA) in San Francisco.

1991

Kerry Parker, CAE, joins HPA as a principal.

when Parlette retired in 1999, Parker runs the \$1.5 million dollar business, which organizes 15 non-profit associations.

When you place a call to, say, the Society for Pediatric Dermatology, or the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California, HPA's knowledgeable staff answers the phone from their San Francisco and Indianapolis offices.

Thanks to cutting-edge hardware/software and social-media technology, staff members are able to field requests for information, maintain databases, run meetings, and create all promotional materials, such as websites, e-mail programs, and professional brochures. HPA has been known to help both memberships and volunteer corps soar.

"Thanks to Holland-Parlette," says Pamela Hymel, MD, past president of the Western Occupational & Environmental Medicine Association, "our conferences have been financially sound and have enabled us to provide continuing medical education for our members—even in this market downturn."

Though she's firmly settled in her role at HPA, Parker's job is hardly stagnant—she tackles many different types of projects. In one week, she might put on a management academy in San Diego, present to a medical board in Sacramento, or prep bills with contracted lobbyists on behalf of the associations she represents. Parker says her own past experiences (mainly, her undergraduate and master's degrees) come in handy every day. She also relies on support from her own highly skilled team, including Lindeman, who heads up HPA's Indianapolis office.

"Because of the varied nature of the work we do, we look for people who find excitement working together and moving from one project and association to another," she says. Parker herself fits this description well: "If I did the same thing every day, I'd get bored," she says.

Despite her success, Parker admits that her career has not been without setbacks. A year ago, after HPA had been successful in dramati-

In one week, you might find Parker putting on a management academy, presenting to a medical board, or prepping bills with contracted lobbyists.

cally growing an association by bringing in \$3 million in grants (and hiring new staff to handle the increased workload), that client decided to proceed on its own. The split forced HPA to take a hard look at its own strategies.

"It was an enormous learning experience for the whole staff," Parker says. "In retrospect, we realized we just shouldn't be so focused and reliant on one large client. We had to put forth at least as much time and effort on our own company's health and growth."

This spirit of self-awareness, paired with feedback from groups like the Leaders Circle of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), San Francisco chapter, has led to success. Six months after its setback, HPA landed four new clients and developed the company's first strategic plan: to take the annual budget to \$5 million in five years.

Through it all, Parker continues to seek knowledge and inspire others. On her bedside table can be found books like *The Genius In All of Us* by David Shenk and *Social Networking for Nonprofits* by Andy Steggle. She does her best to stay current on the political and social issues that affect her clients' initiatives. And she's always on the lookout to nurture potential leaders.

"One of the things I got from NAWBO," Parker says, "is that they have challenged me to go beyond nonprofits." Might, then, a run for office be in her future?

"I don't think anything is out of the question," she says. "I've helped other people run for office, and I am sure I could do it. But I love what I'm doing: helping others get where they need to be to make a difference." —PAMELA BLOOM

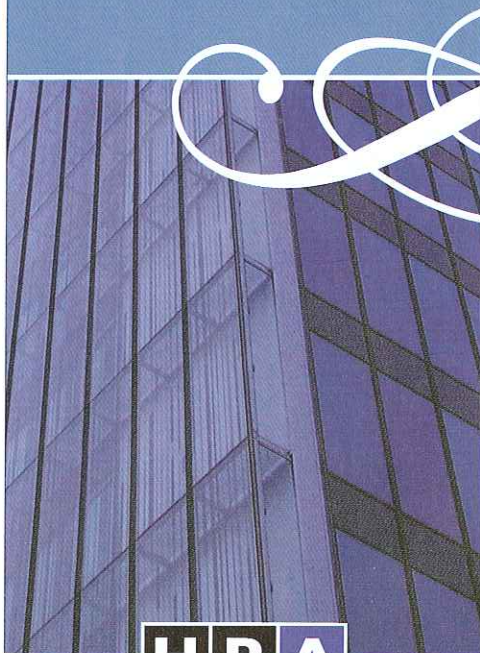
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1996

Kent Lindeman, CMP, joins HPA.

1999

Carol Parlette retires and Lindeman becomes co-principal with Parker.

2005

San Francisco-based HPA opens its first Midwest office in Indianapolis.