

Picture perfect: Photojournalist Linda Solomon envisions new beginnings at Women to Work fund-raiser

By Wensdy Von Buskirk • Contributing Writer •
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When photojournalist Linda Solomon was asked to serve as honorary co-chair for Trade Secrets, she wanted to do more than just put her name on the invitation

Trade Secrets, set for 6 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at the Townsend Hotel, raises money for Jewish Vocational Services' Women to Work program.

"I wanted to get involved," she said. "I decided to work with women in the program."

Solomon led nine Women to Work participants through a photography workshop, then gave each a disposable camera and an assignment to shoot photos representing "new beginnings."

"I wanted to get involved," she said. "I decided to work with women in the program."

"I wanted to see how these women expressed the theme of a new beginning. What does that mean to them? What does that mean when we start over and how would you express it in photography?" Solomon said.

"They're very beautiful, thought-provoking photos."

Solomon selected one photo from each woman to appear in an exhibit that will be unveiled during Trade Secrets.

"The women have not seen their photos so they do not know what we selected," Solomon said. "It was a difficult decision. So many of the photos were spectacular. That night, when you see what they've revealed, we'll all learn something."

Solomon, who splits her time between homes in Bloomfield Township and Tucson, Ariz., and her office in Birmingham, is a nationally known celebrity

photographer, TV correspondent for Good Morning America, and best-selling author.

During the event, she will divulge 10 "trade secrets" of her own.

"I'm going to just share from my heart what really has made an impact on my own life and my own career. I will share what I've learned from others, and really my whole philosophy," Solomon said. "I don't really believe in having secrets. I feel it's so important to share what you know and pass on knowledge."

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Solomon said her talk will have a few surprises, including the fact that she is in "the stone age" when it comes to technology.

"You would think because I've been a photographer all my life, starting at the age of 5, I would be sort of technical ... well I am the most nontechnical person," she said. "For years I didn't even have a computer at my office and pretty much I do everything by phone."

Solomon admits being technologically challenged has caused her some embarrassment, like the time she was putting together her book *The Key* and trusted her husband to e-mail Barbara Walters and ask her to submit an inspirational quote.

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He signed the request "Smoochie Linda."

"Well, it worked didn't it? She said yes," Solomon said.

Although Solomon quips that she is "one of the last photographers in the world" to switch to digital, that hasn't stopped her from achieving an enviable career.

She has photographed famous celebrities — from Robert Redford and Richard Gere — for her best-selling book *People We Know, Horses They Love*. She's been featured on Oprah, CBS Evening News and the Today Show, and has covered the Academy Awards for more than 20 years.

FOR THE KIDS

She also dedicates herself to teaching children how to express themselves through photography, visiting hundreds of classrooms and initiating photography service projects with children — including those touched by homelessness, drugs and abuse.

"It's a Snap," an educational program Solomon founded, has donated more than a million cameras to elementary school children nationwide.

"When I see my students take great photos, that's a great feeling. When you can help someone else it's something that changes who you are and makes you feel so much better about yourself. There's a direct correlation between having a healthier life and helping others," Solomon said.

Solomon credits mentors as a big part of her success, and during Trade Secrets she will join TV journalists Lila Lazarus, Sherry Margolis, Ruth Spencer and Barbara Koster to honor one of her own mentors, the late Emmy Award-winning TV reporter Dell Warner, who died last year.

"We're each going to share one of Dell's secrets that she shared with us," Solomon said. "It's going to be a fun night for women full of bits of wisdom and insights. Why not? Now more than ever we've got to help each other and this is the perfect group."

Solomon said she believes strongly in the mission of Women to Work.

"It is so important to give women the proper skills so that they can get back into the workplace especially now more than ever, to give them the courage to change direction or start over," Solomon said.

Proceeds from the sale of Trade Secrets tickets, which start at \$125, along with raffle contributions, benefit Women to Work.

Raffle prizes include a Charriol necklace from Tappers Diamonds and Fine Jewelry of West Bloomfield, celebrity autographed items, and even a walk-on role in a movie.

Attendees are asked to bring a photo of themselves to share at the table.

For information, visit www.jvsdet.org or contact Sharon Snyder, JVS chief development officer, (248) 233-4290 or ssnyder@jvsdet.org. For more on Linda Solomon, visit www.lindasolomonphotography.com.

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