

MINORITIES AND WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Women Who Make A Difference

Deborah Aguiar-Vélez

An accomplished engineer and businesswoman, Deborah Aguiar-Velez, Founder, President and Owner of Sistemas Corporation and its subsidiary, Sistemática Training and Computer Centers, is nationally recognized for innovative leadership in the areas of entrepreneurship, technical development and public service.

Aguiar-Velez founded Kendall Park, New Jersey-based Sistemas Corporation in 1983. The company provides customized software for engineers, scientists and technical personnel. Her clients include ExxonMobil, Baxter, BASF, Xerox, Colgate-Palmolive and the State of New Jersey. Aguiar-Velez has also created and led workshops on computer security, ethics and repetitive strain injuries for several small- to medium-sized corporations.

Recognizing a need to provide Internet and computer training in both English and Spanish, in 1996 Aguiar-Velez launched the subsidiary Sistemática Training and Computer Centers. She hopes eventually to open 21 centers in urban areas to offer training as well as computer parts, systems and technical

support to local government, small- to medium-sized businesses and not-for-profit organizations.

Aguiar-Velez is a member of the Board of Directors of SBLI USA Mutual Life Insurance Company, Inc., where she also serves on the Executive and Finance Committees. The 63-year old company has more than 400,000 customers and \$1.3 billion in assets. Aguiar-Velez has played a major role in expanding SBLI USA's operations into Puerto Rico.

She was a United States representative to "China 2010: Women Entrepreneurs," an Atlantic Council of the United States initiative which brought together women business leaders from the U.S., the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

From 1988 to 1990, Aguiar-Velez was the director of the Division of Small Business and Women and Minority Business for the New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development. There, she managed a 33-person staff and a \$2.5 million budget and re-engineered the division into an aggressive, customer-oriented organization. Before founding her company, she was a senior analyst for the Exxon Corporation in Florham Park, New Jersey.

Aguiar-Velez has over 24 years of training experience working as an adjunct instructor at universities, local colleges and overseas. She has taught computer languages to engineering students at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and has spoken at Princeton University, Smith College, Penn State and, most recently, Harvard University.

In addition to her service on the board of SBLI USA, Aguiar-Velez has served on the

boards of The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, PA and CoreStates New Jersey National Bank. She is listed in *Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans*, and *Who's Who of American Women*. She



has been the recipient of numerous honors, among them *Hispanic Magazine's* Latina Excellence Award for Science and Technology and Businessperson of the Year by the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Mercer County, New Jersey.

Aguiar-Velez earned her bachelor's degree in chemical engineering with honors from the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and has attended two executive education programs at the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

She is married to German Velez and they have two daughters.



Deborah Aguiar-Vélez – One of this year's Women Who Make A Difference