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Alumna Profile: Author, Leadership Guru Henley

Alumna Dede Henley to Read from Her New Book Nov. 20

By Kaitlyn Warter
Class of 2009



SPOKANE, Wash.
– A Gonzaga University alumna who is one of the nation’s top thinkers in the field of leadership is coming to Spokane this week to read from her new book.

Dede Henley, who earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Gonzaga in 1985, will read from her book ***“The Secret of Sovereignty: Women Choosing Leadership at Work and in Life”*** at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 20 at Auntie’s Bookstore at 402 W. Main St. The event is free and open to the public.

Henley was just named by Leadership Excellence magazine (November 2008) as one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders and Practitioners in leadership development in government, education, military, and nonprofit organizations.

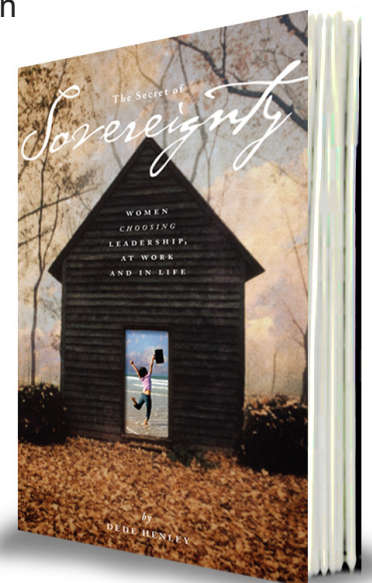
A dynamic speaker, consultant, executive coach, and CEO of the Dede Henley Group, Henley has more than 20 years experience in women’s leadership development. Her latest book guides women on a successful journey to a life focused on the power of freedom and choice. Though her book is written primarily for women leaders in the

workplace, it remains applicable to a wide range of audiences with varying lifestyles. The book also discloses what she calls the “Seven Deadly Traps for Women Leaders” and “Five secrets to achieving a sovereign life.”

“Sovereignty, simply put, is the freedom to choose — something it seems we all would like more of in our lives,” Henley said in a recent interview. “Over the past several decades, increasing numbers of women have been gaining their freedom at home, in the workplace, within their families. Out of this personal growth, a new brand of women leader is on the rise —groundbreakers who have learned how to blend their natural leadership competencies with the archetypal energies of the feminine.”

As a developer and frequent contributor in the field of leadership, Henley delivers both long-term and positive results for Fortune 500 companies globally. Her innovative and powerful approach has been successful in preparing women for leadership roles in the workplace. Henley’s technique is simple, clear, practical and workable; it has been described by some as “transformational” and “life-changing.”

Through Henley’s collaborations with



leadership pioneers Warren Bennis, Peter Block and Tom Peters, she has refined her thinking about women in leadership and became one of the most sought-after consultants in the country.

As women continue to increase their leadership roles in the workplace, companies are beginning to recognize the significant advantages they can achieve by investing more in women leaders, she said. In business circles, recognition of the need to develop and mentor more women leaders is supported by scientific research suggesting a positive link between gender diversity and fiscal performance:

A 19-year study published in the Harvard Business Review of 215 Fortune 500 companies shows a strong correlation between a strong record of promoting women into the executive suite and high profitability. Three measures of profitability were used to demonstrate that the 25 Fortune 500 firms with the best record of promoting women to high positions are between 18 and 69 percent more profitable than the median Fortune 500 firms in their industries. (*Roy D. Adler, Women in the Executive Suite Correlate to High Profits. Glass Ceiling Research Center; 2001.*)

Another study of Fortune 500 companies revealed that organizations with the highest representation of women in top management performed better than organizations with the lowest female representation as measured by return on equity, and total return to shareholders. (*Catalyst: U.S. Fortune 500 companies. The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity; 2004*)

While these studies involve large, multi-national companies, the positive impacts of women in the workplace can be seen in all types of organizations. Henley, who later earned a master's degree in organization from

Pepperdine University, said her experiences at Gonzaga were foundational to her success today.

"My career was fundamentally shaped at Gonzaga," she said. "I took one class in Organization Behavior and knew I had found my calling. I have never looked back. I feel fortunate to have found that kind of clarity at the ripe, old age of 20." When asked what about Gonzaga has stuck with her the most since graduating, Henley recalled a conversation she once had with one of her philosophy professors who was attempting to explain the need for philosophy in culture. "I was arguing that philosophers should stop wasting time and go get real jobs," she said. After her professor listened to her arguments, he offered her some advice by asking what would be left after the real job was over and life stretched out before a person. "Something anchored inside of me in that conversation with him," Henley recalls. "I saw the need for deeper conversations, meaning in life, poetry, philosophy, beauty. I believe that is what my leadership development consulting firm strives to bring to people in large organizations: a deeper sense of purpose and meaning than they might understand or embrace."

Henley lives in Seattle with her husband and some of their six children, ages 14-29. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her children, kayaking, cross-country skiing, reading and writing. She also loves to garden. "Digging my hands into the cool earth in my garden grounds me entirely and reminds me to be patient with the process of life."

For more information about Henley, visit her Web site: dedehenley.com

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