



News Release

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Laurie McDonald Jonsson Named to National Women's Business Council

Washington, DC – Laurie McDonald Jonsson has been appointed to a three-year term on the National Women's Business Council. Based in Seattle, WA, McDonald Jonsson is President and CEO of Stellar International; Chairman, CEO and Owner of Stellar Travel; Co-Owner and Board Member of Stellar International Holdings; and, Owner, M-W Farms.

The National Women's Business Council is a bi-partisan Federal government council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners. Members of the Council are prominent women business owners and leaders of women's business organizations. The Council is committed to:

- *Conducting* research on issues of importance to women business owners and their organizations;
- *Communicating* these findings widely;
- *Connecting* the women's business community to public policy makers; and
- Providing programs and platforms for *change* in order to expand and improve opportunities for women business owners and their enterprises.

"I am delighted to welcome Laurie McDonald Jonsson to the National Women's Business Council," said Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies and Chair of the National Women's Business Council. "Laurie has certainly distinguished herself in her business accomplishments. I'm also greatly impressed by her dedication to helping women support each other globally. I'm confident the Council will be enriched by her participation."

Laurie McDonald Jonsson has combined a successful travel and business career with her personal commitment to

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global women's leadership. For the past 20 years, McDonald Jonsson has built several successful companies. One of the first women in the cruise ship business, she managed and directed complex operations from negotiating and supervising ship construction to overseeing all aspects of the business. The multi-tiered cruise line grew to five, one-thousand passenger ships sailing to Alaska, Mexico and the Caribbean. She now owns Stellar Travel, which specializes in cruise ship travel. She also owns Stellar International, a successful investment company focusing on a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures.

Washington State Governor Gary Locke named McDonald Jonsson as his first Chair of the Governor's Executive Women's Council. As Chair, along with Senator Patty Murray, she led a women's trade and study delegation to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. In 1999, McDonald Jonsson received the Leading Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Monaco. She was a founding director of Expedia.com, and also serves as a founding director of Commerce Bank, both of which successfully went public while she was a director. She is also a board member of the International Women's Forum, and is the Founding Chair of the Center for Women & Democracy at the University of Washington. In 2002 and 2003 with Senator Maria Cantwell, McDonald Jonsson led delegations from the Center for Women & Democracy to Cuba. She is currently leading a delegation to Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, furthering her commitment to help build a global women's network.

"It is imperative that more women make their voices heard on a global level," said McDonald Jonsson. "One of my goals as a member of the Council will be to link women of the world so that we can learn from each other and support women's achievements wherever they may be."

As the nation's advocate for the more than 9 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., the National Women's Business Council works to promote increased access to affordable health care; access to capital; access to federal contracts and international markets; and access to the information and expertise women business owners most need to succeed.

Women business owners currently represent almost 38% of all U.S. firms, with a growth rate twice that of all businesses. They employ one out of every four company workers and contribute \$3.6 trillion in annual revenues.

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