

Power Influence & Anonymity

The Seven Women Power Brokers You Need to Know

By Robert Chappell, Neil Heinen and Brennan Nardi / Photographs by Martha Busse

Like every place, everywhere, Madison is full of the movers and shakers we get to know because we either run in those circles or because they are media darlings we see daily on TV and in print. And, like every other place, in Madison we can look behind every great (or not-so-great) leader and find the men and women who make things happen. They do it because of, or in spite of, their relative anonymity. And they do it because they love what they do.

The Gov's Right Hand: Susan Goodwin

There are those who believe that if they walked unannounced into Governor Jim Doyle's office, they'd find Susan Goodwin sitting at his desk. Doyle tapped his longtime campaign chief and policy aide as his chief of staff immediately upon election, and the two are certainly of like mind. She's earned her reputation as a first-class strategist and policy analyst, loyal and unflappable. Supporters respect the influence her close relationship with Doyle guarantees. Opponents don't want to mess with her. And her genuine preference for working behind the scenes is a chief executive's dream. When Doyle named longtime friend Steve Bablitch to replace Marc Marotta as head of DOA last summer, some wondered if the power structure had changed. Not a prayer. Goodwin's in charge. Bonus attribute: she and husband UW exec Al Fish were named one of Madison Magazine's top power couples.



The Eco-Executive: Sonya Newenhouse



There is something almost prophetic about the way the color green evokes in our minds both money and nature, industrialists and naturalists. It's as if, somehow, these two bold American archetypes (think Carnegie and Leopold) would inevitably find their way onto the same page of history, even the same spreadsheet. Here in Madison, think of the names Frautschi and Newenhouse.

The corporate philanthropist (Frautschi) crossed the path of the environmental entrepreneur (Newenhouse) via J.H. Findorff & Son, which has so far recycled a whopping seventy-five percent of its waste during construction of Overture Center. Sonya Newenhouse, president of Madison Environmental Group, was the savvy consultant hired onto the Overture project by the waste reduction nonprofit, WasteCap Wisconsin, which she had founded years earlier. Dubbed an "emerging civic visionary" in an Isthmus article last year, the thirty-nine-year-old launcher of three downtown business ventures (her consulting group, a car-sharing company, and a commercial building purchase and renovation on the Square) is quietly and purposely making her earth-friendly mark. Her client roster includes Home Savings Bank, Culver's, UW, Alliant Energy, and several downtown developers. Newenhouse is also raising her profile nationally: she recently received a two-year fellowship with a prestigious U.S. environmental leadership program.

The Power Supply: Phyllis Wilhelm

A two-year stint as chairman of the board of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce ensured public recognition of Gary Wolter as president and CEO of Madison Gas and Electric Company. But visit a Downtown Madison, Inc., meeting,



a TEMPO lunch, a Leadership Greater Madison class or any community discussion where economic development is on the agenda, and you'll find MG&E director for economic development Phyllis Wilhelm. With board service as broad as the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and the Fitchburg Community Economic Development Authority, Wilhelm is a highly respected and much-in-demand expert on regional and community growth and economic vitality. She serves MG&E admirably as an influential advocate for economic growth and healthy communities.

The One We Turn To: Mona Winston



Mona Winston has probably won more awards, served on more boards and committees, and been cited in local media reports more than the rest of our power list combined. But she just never stops saying yes, rolling up her sleeves, taking on a new challenge and helping this community move forward. Look behind the scenes over the years at Monona Terrace, the Madison Community Foundation, Study Circles on Race (now Respectful Dialogues), the Urban League of Greater Madison, Juneteenth Day, and on and on, and you'll find Winston. She doesn't often get a lot of attention, but by virtue of her breadth of service, the sheer number of major civic events with which she's been associated, and the universal respect for her wisdom and knowledge, she is easily one of Madison's most powerful and influential women.

The Corporate Caregiver: Renee Moe

At twenty-nine, Renee Moe is still youthful enough to be considered a "young professional," but she's moving up the influence ladder fast. While United Way of Dane County president and CEO Leslie Howard has long had an uncanny ability to identify talented, committed, thoughtful and wise women for her staff (we also considered Nan Cnare, Kathy Hubbard, Kathy Martinson, Deedra Atkinson and Sandra Erickson for this year's power list), Moe has tackled her position as VP for resource development/marketing with remarkable energy, enthusiasm and confidence. She does bring a youthful perspective that any successful organization should value. But she also has a deep appreciation and respect for the United Way's mission, its unique and terribly important role in our community, as well as for the staff with whom she's so lucky to work. Moe's earned her seat at the table, while still being an example of Howard's commitment not just to attracting the best staff, but to developing our community's future leaders.



The Business Best Friend: Katherine Naherny



Madison's city government doesn't exactly have a business-friendly reputation. But for a decade or more, an effort has been under way to cut through the red tape, and Katherine Naherny is the one with the scissors. A thirty-year veteran in the city's planning and development department, Naherny heads up the Office of Business Resources. Founded five years ago, OBR tries to be a one-stop shop for businesses looking to start, expand or locate in Madison. They host an online clearinghouse of information at businessmadison.com, and work closely with the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, Small Business Advisory Council, and others to hook businesses up with whatever they happen to need. Naherny also serves as the city's primary staff presence on the Economic Development Commission and plays an important role in guiding city policies relating to business. Naherny hopes the OBR will continue to increase its contact with local businesses and make more

quantitative data available to civic and business leaders. OBR is also expecting to plug in to the Collaboration Council and their efforts to create a more regional approach to economic development. "They're trying to engage the whole greater Madison area," she says. "We think that's really important." While Naherny will retire from the city this month, she says she plans to stay involved on the Madison Repertory Theatre's board and beyond. We have no doubt it won't be the last we hear from her.

The Class Act: Mary Gulbrandsen

No one appreciates Mary Gulbrandsen's contributions to the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) more than her boss, superintendent Art Rainwater. When we included Gulbrandsen in Madison Magazine's 2004 People You Should Know list, Rainwater was the first to let us know we'd made an inspired choice. As MMSD chief of staff for the last two years, Gulbrandsen's influence on all aspects of Madison's K-12 schools is undeniable. From long-range planning to finance and operations to performance and achievement, district administration minutes suggest Gulbrandsen has spent the last two years in meetings. But seeing her in action on some of the most difficult issues, like the school environment for kids and families of color, proves what a skilled administrator she's become. Add on top of all that her striking warmth and good sense, and Gulbrandsen seems a perfect fit for her behind-the-scenes position of power.



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