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## President's Remarks Annual Meeting ~ October 19, 2006

Please join me in thanking Carol Sanger for providing 18 months of leadership and vision to NSWIB. It's been a long and challenging journey, filled with humor and good memories. We were a good team and I am grateful for the relationship we have developed along the way.

In the years that I have been a member of North Shore Women in Business, I have seen countless unforgettable examples of women supporting each other as friends, peers, customers, connectors, colleagues, teachers, and students. I have seen remarkable commitment and tireless dedication from staff and volunteers, from Officers and Directors to committee members and special event volunteers. To run a great organization and deliver exceptional services, we must have good people in front of, beside, and behind us. We have those good people and it's my honor and privilege to work with all of you as President of North Shore Women in Business in 2007.

My friend, Grace Martins, advised me to use this opportunity to show you my heart by sharing my vision with you. So, please indulge me for a moment. If I were to examine all of my volunteerism throughout my life, I would say that my work has served a single personal purpose-to empower women. My volunteer roots are in the YWCA whose mission is the empowerment of women and the elimination of racism. The term "empowerment" is often overused and its meaning may have lost some significance. To me, empowerment begins with providing access where none existed before. That means working as a group to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It means providing environments that are free of violence. It means providing opportunities for women to learn leadership skills and develop personally and professionally. It means sharing our knowledge and mentoring other women. Ultimately, it means enhancing the capacity of women to achieve economic independence.

Our individual reasons for joining North Shore Women in Business are obvious. We are all here to grow our businesses. I would like to suggest that we are also here to empower each other. We can empower our members by hiring them or buying their products, by singing their praises and referring them to others, and by connecting them with people who can help them to achieve their long-term goals. We can also empower our members by providing them with vital information and opportunities to develop leadership skills. We can invite them into our inner circles. I can guarantee that when we empower others, we empower ourselves and ultimately grow our businesses.

I encourage you to make every effort to do business with and refer business to each other. Look to our members first by using your directory and our web site when looking for any service or product you might need. Surveys of our members show that those who get involved are far more satisfied with their membership. The payback for your time is the relationships you will develop which will in turn help you to grow your business. Relationship building is not about whom you meet, it's about whom you get to know. Get involved on a committee. I know we will all benefit from your contribution.

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**Ruth A. Sheets** is the principal of **Ducks in a Row Consulting**, a small business consulting firm working with start ups, fix ups, and build ups. Ducks in a Row Consulting brings the secrets and know-how of corporate consulting to small business, where it can only make a faster, bigger, and more profitable difference. Call 978-463-2264 or email [info@ducksinarowconsulting.com](mailto:info@ducksinarowconsulting.com) to learn more.

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