

# Soledad O'Brien Highlights the 4th Annual California Diversity & Leadership Conference



*Soledad O'Brien & conference attendees*

The California Diversity Council held its 4th Annual Diversity and Leadership Conference at the Hilton Hotel in Concord, CA on April 18th - 19th. A diverse mix of executives attended the event to explore the theme "From Awareness to Action." Participants collaboratively shared tools and experiences promoting an effective culture of inclusion.

On April 18th, the conference began with the "Most Powerful and Influential Women Awards Breakfast," which honored 20 women for their leadership excellence within their respective organizations. They were also honored for sustaining a record of accomplishments and contributions to their field of work throughout the scope of their career. During the awards ceremony, Michigan's former

governor, Jennifer Granholm delivered the keynote speech. In her speech, Gov. Granholm challenged women in attendance to strive for excellence within their organizations.

Following the "Most Powerful and Influential Women Awards Breakfast," 15 male and female executives were honored with the "Multicultural Leadership Award" for demonstrating characteristics of leadership within their community and for their commitment to professional excellence within their organizations. For this awards session, Prairie View A & M's President of Prairie View, TX, Dr. George Wright, gave the keynote speech, in which he shared his personal and professional experiences which helped him excel in his career.

In addition to both awards ceremonies, participants were given opportunities to attend a series of concurrent panel sessions, which focused on topics that promoted organizational changes by incorporating diversity and inclusion best practices.

"Diversity and inclusion are necessary and vital ingredients in the workplace," said Dennis Kennedy, Founder & CEO of the National Diversity Council. "This conference gave participants an opportunity to share the tools necessary to build a diverse talent pool, in order to help them achieve their organizational goals."

Closing out the conference on April 19th, CNN's Soledad O'Brien shared her personal and professional experiences in her keynote speech. In 2010, O'Brien wrote the critically acclaimed memoir *The Next Big Story: My Journey through the Land of Possibilities*, which chronicles her biggest reporting moments and how her upbringing and background have influenced her experiences. O'Brien's speech was befitting for the conference's theme.

The California Diversity Council would like to thank the sponsors, speakers, volunteers, and attendees for helping make the California Diversity & Leadership Conference a success.