

Speaker Biographies

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, US EPA

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson leads the EPA's efforts to protect the environment for all Americans. Ms. Jackson is committed to protecting air and water quality, preventing human exposure to toxic contamination in our communities, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This work will help safeguard the health of US residents. She promised that all of EPA's efforts will follow the best science, adhere to the rule of law, and be implemented with unparalleled transparency.

Ms. Jackson is the first African-American to serve as EPA Administrator. As administrator, she has made it a priority to focus on vulnerable groups including children, the elderly, and low-income communities that are particularly susceptible to environmental and health threats. Whether she is addressing these vulnerable groups or other environmental issues, she promised all stakeholders a place at the decision-making table.

Before becoming EPA's Administrator, Jackson served as Chief of Staff to New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine and Commissioner of the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Prior to joining DEP, she worked for 16 years as an employee of the U.S. EPA. Jackson is a summa cum laude graduate of Tulane University. She earned a master's degree in chemical engineering from Princeton University. Born in Pennsylvania, Ms. Jackson grew up a proud resident of New Orleans, Louisiana. She now resides in Washington D.C.

Esther Vassar, SBA National Ombudsman

Esther H. Vassar was appointed National Ombudsman and Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness for the U. S. Small Business Administration in August 2009. As Ombudsman, Ms. Vassar works to enhance the communication and relationships between small businesses and federal regulatory agencies. She draws upon a wide array of firsthand experience to successfully complete her work. Her former roles include director of a state regulatory agency and Virginia's Department of Minority Business Enterprise, owner of two small businesses, and work with businesses and community organizations.

Ms. Vassar, a three time gubernatorial appointee, is a graduate of Howard University, University of Virginia, Harvard University Executive Program for State Officials, and Virginia Executive Institute and Leadership Metro Richmond. Prior to her appointment as National Ombudsman, Ms. Vassar served as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, a regulatory agency with more than 2,000 employees and 344 retail liquor stores. In 1990, Ms. Vassar was the gubernatorial appointee of Governor L. Douglas Wilder in charge of directing the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise. In this role, Ms. Vassar administered the state's minority business procurement efforts, and she also created and executed the governor's African trade initiatives and monitored the purchasing procedures of all state agencies.

Ms. Vassar is best known and recognized for her contributions and service to her communities and the people in those communities. In 2008, Ms. Vassar was inducted into "The George Washington Spirits Society" for her extraordinary contributions to the international community. Ms. Vassar was honored for her dedication to alcohol related programs. She effectively advanced initiatives that encouraged social responsibility and moderation in alcohol consumption. Additionally, in 2008, Ms. Vassar received Dominion Virginia Power's Strong Men and Women Excellence in Leadership award.

Sheila Savar, The Savar Institute

Sheila Savar is the president and CEO of The Savar Institute, a firm she founded in 2002. The firm – a Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) of Project Management Institute - specializes in the human element of business. Ms. Savar's main mission is helping others succeed. Her firm accomplishes this mission by providing companies with the leadership, communication, and networking skills needed to advance individual careers and overall business

success. Ms. Savar is passionate about providing a helping hand to those that wish to improve their professional and personal lives. She regularly delivers pro bono keynote speeches, facilitations and mentoring programs to local, national, and international non-profit organizations and educational institutions.

Before starting her firm, Ms. Savar enjoyed a successful, more than 20 year career in sales, customer service and executive management. She worked for a broad range of companies from start-up ventures to Fortune 100 companies. She is a gifted speaker and developmental facilitator whose motivational style inspires people to take action and make behavioral changes that are professionally and personally transformational. She presents on an array of leadership and development topics including networking, mindful leadership, empowerment, communication and interpersonal skills, and employee and client engagement.

In 2008, Sheila authored her first book *The Power of Networking*, an easy-to-read, practical how-to guide for achieving career and business success. In 2009, Sheila was admitted as a Vistage Expert Resource Speaker; Vistage is an international executive leadership organization with more than 15,000 CEO members in 16 countries.