

2018 YWCA TORONTO WOMEN OF DISTINCTION



JULIA DEANS *Business*

As the CEO of Futurpreneur Canada, Julia Deans has safeguarded the aspirations of women entrepreneurs in Canada and ensured that their futures are bright. Since she joined Futurpreneur in 2013, she and her team have helped approximately 2,000 women launch new businesses and have counseled and trained thousands more. Futurpreneur helps aspiring entrepreneurs aged 18 to 39 start and grow successful businesses with business coaching, non-collateral financing, and volunteer mentoring.

Julia's passion is connecting people to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. In May, she will take this passion into her new role as inaugural CEO of the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, a new organization aiming to make Canadian children the most literate in the world.

Julia's exceptional leadership has opened doors for many women and she is deeply dedicated to ensuring that women are represented at the highest levels of her organization. By connecting women, promoting their stories, and sourcing speaking opportunities for them at roundtables and national summits, Julia is changing the face of business in Canada.

As CEO of CivicAction from 2005 to 2012, Julia led the organization's efforts to increase visible minority leadership in the Greater Toronto Area through DiverseCity and ensured that women actively participated and held leadership roles in many other initiatives.

In her earlier capacity as an equity-seeking lawyer, she helped to advance the Native Women's Association of Canada's claim against the federal government for excluding women from Charter of Rights consultations with Indigenous groups and was also a Women's Legal Education and Action Fund volunteer.

Julia's many accolades and awards are a keen representation of the impact of her work and volunteerism. She received the University of Toronto's Arbor Award and was recognized as a Woman of Influence - Canadian Diversity Champion in 2012. She was also named as one of Canada's Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network in 2014 and 2017 and served as Toronto Chair for the International Women's Forum.

A true champion for women in business and the economy, Julia is paving the way for those following her and heralding their accomplishments and ideas as she goes.


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