



THE CHICAGO NETWORK

## **Three CEOs Headline The Chicago Network's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Women in the Forefront Luncheon**

*Network members reflect on leadership, teambuilding, and responsibility to build pipeline of future women leaders*

The Chicago Network welcomed more than 1,600 guests to its 30<sup>th</sup> annual Women in the Forefront Luncheon at the Chicago Hilton on June 28. As the organization celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Network featured three of its own members – all CEOs – for a wide-ranging discussion on careers, leadership, and responsibility. The three women – Gail Boudreaux, President & CEO, Anthem, Inc.; Mary Dillon, CEO, Ulta Beauty, Inc.; and, Christine Leahy, CEO, CDW – spoke of their journeys from early career into the c-suite, citing the importance of seeking out new assignments, listening to and engaging with your co-workers, and the obligation to reach back and elevate other women.

Continuous learning was a consistent theme. "Always raise your hand," said Boudreaux. "Hard work is always important, but you have to be willing to put yourself out there and learn new things," she said.

Leahy added, "A third of your work should be that which you can do with your hands tied behind your back. A third should be a stretch, and a third completely new. It's the only way you'll continue to learn."

They also discussed how crucial culture is to a workplace. "Build a leadership team that shares your values," said Dillon. "Find people who look at things not just through a personal lens, but through an enterprise lens, and can collaborate," she added.

Dillon also noted the role women leaders have to pay it forward. "We have a responsibility as female CEOs to build pipelines for women to succeed," she said.

The luncheon was opened by Susan Gallagher, President & CEO of BPI Group and Chair of The Chicago Network, and Kate Bensen, President and CEO of The Chicago Network, Chicago's preeminent organization of leading professional women. Irika Sargent, co-anchor of CBS2 Chicago served as emcee.

The annual luncheon follows the early June launch of the *The Chicago Network Equity Principles*, a major initiative to engage Chicago-area organizations in a pledge to create gender equity in their workplaces by 2030. More than 70 public and private companies, associations, and non-profits have signed the pledge so far.

Sponsors of the 2019 luncheon include: Premier Sponsor – Discover; Platinum Sponsors – Allstate Insurance, Anthem, Aon, CDW, Kirkland & Ellis, The Northridge Group, and Ulta Beauty.

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The Chicago Network is an organization of Chicago's leading professional women, who connect with each other for professional and personal growth, advance civic, business, and philanthropic communities, and inspire and support the next generation of women leaders. For more stories and video content from the 2019 Women in the Forefront Luncheon, please visit [www.thechicagonetwork.org](http://www.thechicagonetwork.org)