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WE-Zine



PROGRESS, DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX



Dear %%FirstName%%,

When I started at Women Employed in 2008, my daughter Charlie was an infant, so I often track my tenure with her lifetime. It's incredible to consider all that we have accomplished in the most recent 17 years of WE's 50-year plus history:

We won **paid time off** that workers can take for things like caring for yourself or a family member, going to medical appointments, attending a school play, caring for your mental health, or any other reason.

We've strengthened **equal pay laws**, including making the hiring process fairer by making it illegal for employers to ask candidates for their current or past wages or benefits (**the No Salary History law**); and requiring employers to include a pay range and description of benefits in job postings (**the Salary Transparency law**).

We made **pregnancy fairness** the law of the land in Illinois. It is illegal for employers to refuse to hire, or refuse to provide reasonable, temporary accommodations to a person who is pregnant, recovering from childbirth, or has a condition related to pregnancy or childbirth.

We eliminated the **subminimum wage** in Chicago to ensure hourly workers can earn the **full minimum wage** with tips on top! And so much more!

During **Women's History Month**—and every damn day of the year—it is important we celebrate all we have accomplished, while also acknowledging everything we have fought for and hold true can be erased—sometimes as easily as with the stroke of a pen. This moment of heightened uncertainty is truly scary. When you look at the words (and people) the Trump Administration is **trying to erase**, I feel like I'm reading through the Women Employed website: advocacy, diversity, equity, gender, inclusion, intersectional, pregnant people, underrepresented, and **WOMEN!**

We refuse to be erased! We refuse to be silenced! We refuse to give up the rights and protections we have fought for and won! Despite feeling angry and exhausted, my resolve has only strengthened. We don't have the privilege to despair. We must meet the demands of this day. I invite you to join Women Employed as **WE** prepare to defend our gains and lay the groundwork for a future where all women and girls prosper, for the future belongs to **US!**

With Hope, Resilience, and Determination,

Mary Kay Devine
Chief of Staff

"She Says" with Michelle Dokes

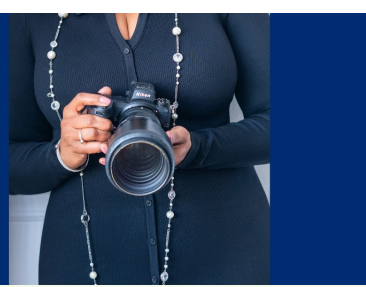
She Says

”
Working with mission-based organizations allows me to share their stories through the images

their stories through the images that I capture. It gives me the opportunity to share a series of candid photographs that showcase the emotion that's felt in the room. That's always my goal.

“

Michelle Dokes



You want to know how to help women become unstoppable? One word, seven letters: **SUPPORT**. When women have the proper support and belief in their dreams, they are truly a force of nature. Michelle Dokes, owner of **Michelle Dokes Photography** knows this all too well. From the moment she decided to step out of her comfort zone and inquire about a unique camera, she was met with a series of fortunate events. From her husband gifting her the camera she inquired about, to her job funding her photography classes, to her family and friends encouraging her to go for it, to her photography peers and instructors providing feedback when needed, Michelle has been supported throughout her 10+ years in the photography industry. She has even seen greater success long after retiring from her 32-year career with AT&T. Going from photographing clients on the side, to now working out of her own studio full-time where she captures the stories and uniqueness of those she works with through headshots, branding photos, events, and much, much more.

Michelle's story is one of hope, determination, faith, and the importance of having the right people around to help you see your vision come to life. Something Michelle now does with each picture she's entrusted to take. And as if her work isn't enough, she has also found time to pay it forward by offering the same support to up-and-coming photographers that she was once given. If you take anything from Michelle, it is as long as you know the what, you will be supplied with the how.

In this month's **"She Says,"** we talk with Michelle Dokes of Michelle Dokes Photography about how her husband reminds her that she's good enough, the importance of working with mission-based organizations, and her advice to women going after their passions, even in their later years.

[Read More](#)

What WE Are Talking About

The Working Lunch Registration is Now Open!

THE WORKING LUNCH

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Networking Reception: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Program & Lunch: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Hilton Chicago,
720 S. Michigan Ave

womenemployed.org/twl

The logo for Women Employed, featuring a stylized orange and yellow graphic of three horizontal bars of increasing height, followed by the text "Women Employed" in a sans-serif font.

Our signature fundraising event, ***The Working Lunch*** is a little over two months away and we are pleased to announce that **ticket sales are now open!**

We invite you to join us on Thursday, May 22nd at the Hilton Chicago for an afternoon of networking, honoring, and celebrating leaders who have dedicated their lives to **Centering Women's Voices** by actively listening, understanding their experiences, and bringing their voices to the tables where fundamental and systemic change happens.

[Purchase Your Tables and Tickets](#)

Interested in being a table leader or sponsor? Contact Mary Kay Devine at mdevine@womenemployed.org.

Questions? Please reach out to Shelby Flores at sflores@womenemployed.org.

WE has always put working women at the heart of everything we do. We appreciate your commitment to building their economic power.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION



Friday, March 21st was **designated by the United Nations as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**, and in our latest edition of *For the Common Good*, we talk about **diversity, equity, and inclusion**.

From day 1, the Trump administration has made good on their promise to aggressively attack and take down diversity, equity, and inclusion, often abbreviated to DEI—closing programs, firing staff, and threatening colleges, universities, and private companies. They've used their bully pulpit to intimidate employers and schools, and many companies and schools have bowed to the pressure by preemptively over complying and walking back their commitment to their employees, students, and the American public.

These alarming actions betray our American values of fairness, opportunity, and equal access. How much do you know about diversity, equity, and inclusion? Can you separate the myths from the facts? [Watch this short video](#) to learn some truth, and [take a deeper dive in part 2](#).

We are ALL endowed with:

The right to life, liberty,

and the pursuit of happiness.



Then read our [post on Medium](#) to learn even more about equity, diversity, and inclusion—why it matters, and actions YOU can take to make a difference.

Read the Post

Sign up for our [Action Network](#) to learn about important information and actions you can take. And check out our webpage at womenemployed.org/commongood to keep up with all the latest.

WE Shattered Our Goal!



Women Employed asked for your help, and YOU delivered. Thank you for supporting our first ever 24-hour fundraising campaign.

Together, we **SHATTERED** our goal of \$40,000, **SMASHED** our \$50,000 bonus round goal, and **HIT** our 2nd bonus round goal of \$60,000 in just 24 hours.

Every dollar raised will get us closer to breaking barriers and building financial power for women. Because of you, we are even more hopeful, resilient, and determined to forge ahead.

On behalf of all working women, their families, and our communities, we thank you!

The Time is truly NOW to keep driving the change we all want to see.

Looking for An Internship with an Impact?

Want to join **The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program?**



Apply by March 28, 2025!

Are you, or someone you know, a college student interested in social justice? Applications for [The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program](#), Women Employed's paid summer internship, are **CLOSING SOON!**

The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program provides a unique opportunity for professional skill building and practical experience by exposing a team of interns to leadership training, front-line research, and an awareness of the barriers low-paid workers experience.

The program seeks to introduce students to all areas of nonprofit work through workshops, guest speakers, and projects. Throughout the summer, interns will become familiar with the history and future of the women's movement; participate in professional development workshops on effective advocacy, nonprofit organizational development, and communications; and explore aspects of social justice work with guest speakers.

If you or someone you know is interested in a career in nonprofit work and passionate about improving women's economic status, make sure to [apply TODAY!](#) **The deadline is March 28th!**

[Learn More and Apply](#)

Welcome Anne Puotinen!



Join us in welcoming our new Director of Development, Anne Puotinen! A long-time Chicagoan, Anne has over 25 years of nonprofit fundraising and management experience at organizations including The Art Institute of Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, and Roosevelt University. Her volunteer work includes public education and performing arts organizations. Anne served on the Local School Council of one Chicago Public School for seven years and taught a drawing-to-writing program for four years at the same school. She currently serves as the President of the Board for Steep Theatre. Anne is committed to enhancing people's lives and celebrating wonder in our world, and WE are so happy to have her on our team!

Resources

[Salary Transparency is Now the Law in Illinois](#)

[You Deserve Fair Pay](#)

[Paid Leave in Illinois and Chicago](#)

[Know Your Rights at Work](#)

Events

On the Blog

[For the Common Good: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[Where in the World is Women Employed?](#)

WE in the News

[Gov. Pritzker Announces Four Appointments to Boards and Commissions](#)

RiverBender

What We're Reading

[The Intersection of Workplace Flexibility and Exercise by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity](#)

Institute for Women's Policy Research

[Child Care Support Services Are an Overlooked Strategy for Re-Enrolling Adult Learners](#)

New America

[Work Requirements Would Cut Medicaid for Older Adults](#)

Justice in Aging

[Unlocking Parent Students' Potential through Intentional Postsecondary Supports](#)

Bipartisan Policy Center

[The Trump Administration Has Made 36 Million Workers Newly Vulnerable to Discrimination and Harassment](#)

Center for American Progress

[Driving prosperity: How Black-owned businesses fueled recent economic growth](#)

Brookings



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