

POWER PACKED: Meet the Bay Area's most influential women. Inside



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20 Most Influential Women in the Bay Area Public Arena



Mimi Halper Silbert

President and CEO,
Delancey Street
Foundation

Residence: San Francisco.

Background: Directed criminal justice projects, taught seminars at 50 police departments and probation departments and consulted with organizations such as San Francisco Juvenile Justice, California Department of Corrections, National Institution of Corrections, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Education: M.A., University of California, Berkeley; University of Massachusetts-Amherst; doctorate in criminology and director of psychodrama, Moreno Academy.

Board memberships: Delancey Street Foundation chairman of the board, California Board of Corrections, Eisenhower Foundation (Washington, D.C.) trustee.

Community involvement: Founding board president of Community Mediation Boards, United Farmworkers, various criminal and juvenile justice organizations.

Other accomplishments: Directed the evaluation of more than 100 projects, designed adult and juvenile justice master plans; 2003 Berkeley Fellow, University of California at Berkeley; the California Psychological Association's 2003 Distinguished Humanitarian Contribution award; and the YMCA's 2003 Humanitarian of the Year Award. Appointments have included the National Institute of Justice, Blue Ribbon Commission on Inmate Population Management and State Police Commission.

Mentors: My parents. Anyone who took my high energy for creativity instead of attention-deficit disorder.

Career turning point: When Delancey Street needed a bigger home, we had to build it ourselves, and I had to become the developer. When I was little, I had scored in the sixth percentile in a mechanical aptitude test, which meant that 94 percent of kids my age were smarter than I was in mechanical aptitude. It was for me phenomenal to find out that I could stretch myself out in areas that were impossible for me.

Advice for an ambitious young woman: Always take a risk. Don't be one of the people who sits around wondering why things weren't done the other way. People and process are the most important of all: No matter what, always choose civility and model behavior and forgiveness and stay true to what's best in yourself and the people around you. The goals will follow. Never put the outcome first.