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NEWS

Ladies' Night

*The following is an excerpt from Ilse Metchek's speech given at the **Fashion Industries Guild of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center** honoree of the year dinner. Metchek, the executive director of the **California Fashion Association** and **L.A. By Design**, gave a rousing speech recognizing many of the women who helped build and continue to support the Los Angeles fashion industry. For full coverage of the event, [click here](#).*

... This is a great opportunity to repeat something that Fannie Hurst once said: "A woman has to be twice as good as a man to go half as far."

So, I'd like to celebrate with the extraordinary women I have met in this business who have been and still are my dear friends.

There are some who are no longer with us, but their contribution is clearly remembered. Marlene Zell and I celebrated together when she became one of the first female vice presidents at **Bullocks**, and my buddy, Ruth Bregman, who was the driving force of the Fashion Industries Guild.

With us here tonight is Ann Keenes, whom I met when she was a buyer for **Diamonds** in Phoenix and applauded as she became the first female senior vice president at **Neiman Marcus**, continuing her splendid career at **Saks**. We traveled the world together in the years after Mitch Metchek died and still talk of the places we never did get to visit together.

Then there is Ann Kohl, who has been a best friend since she arrived from Cedar Rapids, buying for the **Killian Company**, years before she became the first female corporate vice president at **Allied Stores**. My pal Toni Hoberg, who created the **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** out of a passion and an idea, and Lee Hogan Cass, the first woman to be named vice president at **Sears** ... when there was still a Roebuck. Gilda Marx had just opened her first exercise studio, and we all watched as the brand **Flexatard**

by **Gilda** became an international symbol for women's fitness. Evie Kreisler, who wrote everyone's first resume when she had a little office in the [**California**] **Mart**, now owns one of the largest executive search firms in the country. Debbie Heller, now vice president of **Union Bank**, was my first banker when I opened the **Ilse M** dress company. Chieko Kamisato and I lunched at **Berliners** every day when she designed for **Arpeja** before starting **Sweet Inspirations**. Barbara Fields was an assistant dress buyer fresh out of school at the **Kline Kinsler** Office when we first worked together.

And then there is Molly Rhodes, [general manager] of the *California Apparel News*, who I would sometimes gladly pay to keep my name out of the paper. And my darling Vera Campbell, who, pound for pound, is the best damn manufacturer in this room!

These past years, I have been privileged to count among the once-a-week-phone-call group significant achievers like Debbie Steinberg, vice president of **CIT [Financial Services]**, Crystal Zarpas, who just formed her own law firm, and Rosemary Brantley, who created the fashion design program for **Otis College** while maintaining her own company.

Then there are my Marina Del Rey neighbors: Diane [Trauth] Randall, founder and owner of **Rabbit Rabbit Rabbit**, who continues to contribute generously to our industry's causes; Carol Pender of **Cal Safety**, who created a new concept from the industry's need and is now part of an international conglomerate; and Kit Marchel, president of the **Hertz Investment Group**, who works tirelessly for the downtown community.

Would you all stand and show us how glamorous success can look!

The old adage is still true: In order to achieve success, the career woman must look like a woman, act like a lady, think like a man and work like a dog.