

3-25-2004

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University Marketing and Communications, "03/25/2004 - Celebrated St Louis Businesswoman To Lecture.pdf" (2004). 2004. 19.
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Celebrated St. Louis Businesswoman to Lecture at EIU

Mar-25-2004

Deanna Daughhete-Vinson, chief executive officer of American Equity Mortgage, Inc., will present "Today's Business World: Are you Ready?" at 7 p.m. Monday, March 29, as part of Eastern Illinois University's School of Business' Grace T. Bair Lecture Series.

The event is set to take place in the Lumpkin Hall Roberson Auditorium (room 2030). Admission is free and open to the public.

The lecture series serves to honor the memory of Grace T. Bair who was the first graduate of Eastern's School of Business. Daughhete-Vinson's lecture also helps commemorate the university's Women History and Awareness Month celebration, currently in progress.

American Equity Mortgage, founded by Daughhete-Vinson and her husband, Ray, in 1992, has grown from eight employees to 460, has 27 branches and closes loans in 16 different states. Loan Volume in 2003 was well over \$2 billion.

Daughhete-Vinson is a CPA and graduated from Eastern in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in business. She went on to obtain her master's of business administration degree in 1988 from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. She started her career in public accounting, working in the areas of computer consulting, tax and small business consulting.

Daughhete-Vinson is a member of the Mortgage Banker's Association, the Association for Female Executives, the National Home Equity Mortgage Association, the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. In addition, she has served on several boards, including the St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association (RCGA), YWCA, UMB Bank, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Metro St. Louis, St. Louis Social Venture Partners and Eastern's School of Business' Business Advisory Board. She also serves as co-chair for Old Newsboys Day with her husband.

During 2001 and 2002, Daughhete-Vinson was recognized in a number of local and national award programs. Her honors include being named Businesswoman of the Year by NAFE and Entrepreneur of the Year (with her husband) in the St. Louis region of Ernst & Young's prestigious award program. She also was listed among the top women business owners by St. Louis Small Business Monthly and on the Working Women 500 list of top women-owned businesses in the country.

For two consecutive years, American Equity Mortgage has received the Consumers' Choice Award for Debt Consolidation in Atlanta. Other honors include a YWCA Special Leader Award, an Excellence in Enterprise Award from McKendree College and a Business Achievement Award from Eastern Illinois University.