

# Inspiring the Women's History Month Crowd

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If enthusiasm ruled the world, Gloria Mayfield Banks would be global chief executive.

The entrepreneur, [Mary Kay](#) marketing magnate, top African-American sales director in the world, and renowned motivational speaker came to the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) on March 23 as part of its Women's History Month festivities.

She did not disappoint. Like the Energizer Bunny, she burst out of the blocks and never let up, inspiring a crowd of roughly 200 at [Westminster Hall](#).

## Regaling the Crowd

"Living, caring, giving, sharing. Boy oh boy! I like to work with the daring!" she said in her opening. "A magic million. Can you imagine such? Of course you can. We've got the touch. I'm small in stature only yet heavy in belief. I lead by example, you can count on me as I flash this million-dollar smile. The world will know it's all worthwhile. So we bank on the magic, bank on success, bank on some women who simply want the best. I'm proud to be before you and I'm proud to be top rank. I'm Independent Elite Executive National Sales Director Gloria Mayfield Banks!"

Using humor and anecdotes, she regaled the crowd with how she grew her business to more than \$24 million in retail sales and a sales group of 6,000-plus consultants.

Not all of the journey was pretty. In seventh grade, Banks found she was dyslexic, which explained why school, especially reading, was such a chore. She persevered, not only finishing college, but becoming part of the only set of sisters to graduate from [Harvard Business School](#).

## One Life to Live

Banks also endured 10 years of domestic violence, she said. The first time she wore makeup was her first day at Harvard to cover a black eye she received from her first husband. She divorced and was a single parent for seven years. She made the transition from selling [Girl Scout](#) cookies to selling Mary Kay cosmetics, setting sales records in her first year. Toward the end of that year she convinced her children, then 3 and 4, to bear with her as she approached the record and came away not only with a pink Cadillac — the first of many new cars from Mary Kay — but a new sense of confidence.

"You only have one life to live. I didn't have time, but I had the desire. It's the definition of courage, do what you know is right for you even if some others don't see it," Banks, who left a corporate career at IBM 20 years ago to sell cosmetics, told the audience. "Believe in yourself."

She said you are only as good as the people who surround you. She had kind words for her daughter, husband Ken Banks, and 91-year-old mother, who were all in attendance. "My mom is the most encouraging woman in the world," Banks said. "Just on the ride over here she told me 10 times how good I looked."

## Tips for a Successful Life

She closed her presentation with 10 tips for a successful life:

1. Make a decision. "Most of us are poor decision-makers and spend too much time sitting on the fence. Make a decision; if it's the wrong one you can always fix it."
2. "Fake it until you make it. Confidence will carry you a million miles."
3. Vision, imagination, and belief. "Remember when your mother put you in timeout as a child? Within seven minutes you had forgotten why you were punished and were thinking about other things. Go back to your room and visualize with that bright imagination."
4. Time management, money management, skill management, and emotional management. "Putting your keys in the same place every time will help with time management. Don't worry about money management until you have some to manage."
5. Goal-setting. "I really wanted to be on the cover of someone's corporate magazine. Nothing else would do."

6. "You have seven seconds to make an impression. So control it. Smile, be enthusiastic."
7. "It takes passion to push you past the fear."
8. Discipline and hustle. "When people say 'Gloria you work so hard,' I look at them and say, 'Yup.' I work hard and I'm unapologetic about my success. Because I've earned it and I like it. You have to find what you'd like to do."
9. People skills and leadership skills. "How do you feel when you get a handwritten note? ... Practice the gift of encouragement."
10. Short-term sacrifice. "I can do anything for a short while as long as I don't have to do it the rest of my life."

## **Commemorating Women**

The Women's History Month event began with UMB President Jay A. Perman, MD, welcoming the crowd and the speaker.

"Some may question why we still celebrate Women's History Month when, presumably, equality has been achieved and the struggle has ended. But I'd venture that most of the people here today don't believe the struggle has ended. Not when we're still confronting a gender pay gap in nearly every occupation. Not when raising a family is so often at odds with advancing a career. Not when women and girls around the world still struggle to access education, income, property, and justice. And so our work goes on.

"That's why it's imperative that we continue to commemorate the pioneering, courageous women who have brought us to this moment in time. And it's imperative that we honor the equally heroic women who push this University, this state, this nation and world, even further toward true equality, inclusion, and opportunity."

A light lunch was served immediately following the program.