



UMB News

Time to “Retool, Refuel” in Post-Pandemic World

March 11, 2022 | By [Mary Therese Phelan](#)

“I know all of us have seen over the past two years that the pandemic has been difficult. And I believe that it’s been particularly difficult for working women, those of you at this symposium, and many others throughout UMB.”



Top row: Isabel Rambob, Erika Boone, Kathy Flaminio, Gloria Mayfield Banks, Jennifer B. Litchman, Zuleide “Zu” Dietzenbach. Bottom row: MaryBeth Hyland, Sunday J. Jones, Tashni-Ann Dubroy, Patty Alvarez, Thelma Wright, Carin Morrell.

With that, [University of Maryland, Baltimore \(UMB\)](#) President **Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**, welcomed nearly 300 registrants March 9 to the virtual forum, “Retool and Refuel Your Career in the Post-Pandemic Era,” sponsored by [the UMBrella Group: UMB Roundtable on Empowerment in Leadership and Leveraging Aspirations](#).

“But we’ve made it this far, and so far, we’ve survived,” Jarrell continued. “And that in itself is a cause for celebration. But of course, I know you will all agree surviving is not our main objective. Our objective is to thrive, and to have a culture that advantages all of our members.”

Founded and chaired by **Jennifer B. Litchman, MA**, senior vice president for external affairs, UMBrella works to support the success of women and those who identify as women at UMB by helping them achieve their personal and professional goals, enhancing their leadership skills, and championing women at all levels of the organization.

“Today we are here because we are curious about how to retool and refuel our careers in a post-pandemic era,” Litchman said. “It might not quite be post pandemic today, but that day will come and there’s no time like the present to prepare for it.”

In introducing the morning keynote speaker, Litchman described Tashni-Ann Dubroy, PhD, MBA, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Howard University, as a “fast-rising star in the higher education community.”

In her current role, Dubroy oversees areas including facilities management, information technology, campus safety, and university strategy. Before joining Howard, she served as president of Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., where she was named Female President of the Year by HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) Digest, 2017 CEO of the Year in the Triangle region, and one of the “40 Under 40: Excellence in Leadership” honorees by the Triangle Business Journal.

“But I don’t want it to seem as if I’ve only had successes,” Dubroy said. “I’ve had a lot of failures, too. And I want to talk about how it is that I’ve bounced back from them and maintained a character of resilience that has allowed me to progress.”

Dubroy, who emigrated to the United States from Jamaica at 17, found her love for chemistry in the ninth grade, encouraged by a young teacher and many trips to the library for her own research after struggling with the concept of a mole, a unit of measurement used by chemists.

"So, my life rotates around chemistry, even to this day, because I'm still using the analytical thinking that has been infused in me over the years as I face the various levels of obtaining a PhD in chemistry. I've used chemistry in academia, in my family, I've used it in the cosmetology industry. I've used it in entrepreneurship. Chemistry has been good to me."

Dubroy relayed her struggles and triumphs of a career that began as a bench chemist for chemical company giant BASF in Texas, to co-founding Tea and Honey Blends, a hair care company that manufactured and retailed natural hair care products, to becoming the president of her alma mater at 34, and to her current position at Howard University. As an entrepreneur and an academic, she kept many notebooks reflecting on lessons she would learn along the way, among them: sometimes business deals are made on the golf course and not in the boardroom; and a woman will be judged by her clothing in an interview where a man's attire is often overlooked or forgiven. **(View the full keynote in the video above.)**

"There's one theme that I would want everybody here to understand, and it is that I believe in the power of positivity," Dubroy said. "There is no challenge that I've ever come across and there is no failure that I've ever had, without being able to turn it for the good. A door closes, another one opens. When the door closes, say you know what, the Lord didn't mean that one for me, glad it closed. And so, I want to encourage everybody in this audience today, to continue to have a very positive spirit, because there's power in having a positive spirit, maintain that and always stay customer centric."

In the afternoon, attendees heard from keynote Gloria Mayfield Banks, MBA, motivational success strategist and entrepreneur, who was introduced by **M.J. Tooley, MLS, AHIP, FMLA**, associate vice president, academic affairs, and executive director of UMB's [Health Sciences and Human Services Library](#).

"Now, if all of you have done your homework and read the bio of our speaker, you already know she is energy in motion," Tooley said. "Our symposium theme this year is retool and refuel your career in the post-pandemic era, and Miss Gloria Mayfield Banks is an exemplar of retooling and refueling not only her career but her personal life."

Born in Detroit, Banks overcame dyslexia, domestic violence, a painful divorce, and "has constantly moved forward with a focus on people-ality, people skills, energy, enthusiasm, practicality, and humor," Tooley said. "She encourages all of us to imagine our own success and to move from the ordinary to the extraordinary."

"I think this is just an amazing idea to give the women in your community the opportunity to really understand each other, to grow together, to embrace each other, to lift each other, to acknowledge each other, to push each other to a higher level," said Banks, expressing her excitement at being asked to participate in this year's UMBrella Symposium. "This is what we do."

Banks began her professional career in the computer industry, first as a sales representative for IBM and later joining Stratus Computers as a manufacturing marketing manager. She went on to become assistant director of admissions at Harvard Business School, where she traveled nationally and internationally to recruit students. In 1988, as a single mother of two facing a difficult divorce, Banks began selling Mary Kay products to supplement her income. Within a year, she set company sales records, and within a few years, her business had grown to over \$24 million in retail sales and a sales group of more than 6,000 consultants. Her ascent to elite executive national sales director, the highest sales position, was accomplished faster than anyone else in the company's 50-year history. In addition to her position with Mary Kay, Banks is an internationally renowned motivational speaker and sales trainer, a communications consultant, and one of the founding partners of Charisma Factor, Inc., a corporate event planning company.

Noting how women tend to feel they must be superheroes at home, work, and in their communities, Banks encouraged attendees to block out any distractions and focus on spending the afternoon on their own confidence-building journeys.

"So, we're retooling, and we are refueling, and I think that this is a perfect time to do so. So, I want you to relax," Banks said. "We're always doing different things all the time. So, we have to be reminded to stay present. We have to be reminded that this it's okay for you to take this time for just you. It's okay for you to refuel, to retool, to find out what it is that you might want to do to go to the next level."

Banks describes herself as a confidence-building expert. She reminded attendees that building confidence never happens in a linear fashion. Rather, it is something that requires constant attention.

“You get to a place, you build your confidence, and bam, you end up in another place,” she said. “And then you have to rebuild the confidence again, and you rebuild the confidence again, and you rebuild the confidence again. So, what I talk about all day long is becoming super bad all day long.”

According to Banks, building confidence centers on three things: courage, abundance, and one’s circle of influence.

“The first place it starts is with courage,” she said. “You can go back and track any place you grew. And you know it started with courage. You cannot expand your choices until you increase your courage so that you see more, do more. But it starts with the courage. There’s no growth in the comfort zone.” (*View the full keynote in the video below.*)

Other speakers and breakout sessions included:

Sunday J. Jones, MBA, SPHR, director of employee and labor relations in UMB’s [Office of Human Resource Services](#), speaking on “The Great Invitation: New Year, New You, and a New Job, Too!”

Isabel Rambob, DDS, assistant professor at the [University of Maryland School of Dentistry](#) and a member of the UMBrella Group’s Advisory Board and the UMB President’s Council for Women, speaking on “Heels of Power: Boosting Your Professional Presence and Influence.”

Ericka Boone, PhD, acting director of the National Institutes of Health’s Division of Biomedical Research Workforce speaking on “Imposter Syndrome: Confronting the Career Development Monster Hiding Under the Bed.”

Zuleide “Zu” Dietzenbach, MBA, CCMP, director of change management at Mastercard, speaking on “Changing and Succeeding in the Same Breath.”

MaryBeth Hyland, MS, a workplace culture specialist and founder and chief visionary of SparkVision, speaking on “Permission to Be Human: How to Create a Thriving, People-First Culture, Starting with Yourself.”


In an afternoon workshop, “Taking Care of YOU from the Inside Out: MoveMindfully for Mind, Body, and Heart,” Kathy Flaminio, LGSW, MSW, founder of MoveMindfully, a training and consulting company that brings the science of mindfulness, movement, and social-emotional learning into educational, therapeutic, and home environments, led attendees on a series of breathwork and stretching exercises.

In an ongoing effort to shine light on talented and dedicated UMB employees, UMBrella announced three awards to recognize the contributions made by individuals who espouse the mission and goals of the group. The winners, announced by **Crystal Edwards, JD, MA**, assistant dean for academic affairs, [University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law](#), are:

UMBrella Person of the Year — On the Rise: Carin Morrell, MA
public information officer, UMB [Office of Emergency Management](#) and UMB [Police Department](#)

UMBrella Person of the Year — Leading the Way: Thelma Wright, MD, JD, assistant professor, Department of Anesthesiology, [University of Maryland School of Medicine](#)

UMBrella Champion of the Year: Patty Alvarez, PhD, MS, assistant vice president of student affairs, [Office of Academic Affairs](#)

The day’s symposium also raised funds for the [UMB Student Food Insecurity & Emergency Fund](#) , which was created September 2021 to combat food insecurity among students, a problem that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic factors such as inflation.

“What an amazing symposium facilitated by intelligent and inspiring women,” said attendee **Tierra Major Kearny**, prevention and outreach program coordinator at the Office of Academic Affairs Student Counseling Center, when asked to sum up her thoughts of the day. “Tashni-Ann Dubroy gave us the seed that we could be both entrepreneurs and work in higher education all while wearing our high heels. Gloria Mayfield Banks reminded us to embrace our gifts and that there is enough abundance for everyone, we just have to go and get it. After sitting with this information for a while I realized sometimes I shrink myself to give way for others, which is modest, but not true to who I am. If I am called to lead, I should lead and if I am called to teach I should teach. Between the morning and afternoon keynotes, I left the symposium feeling ready to take on the world.”

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