

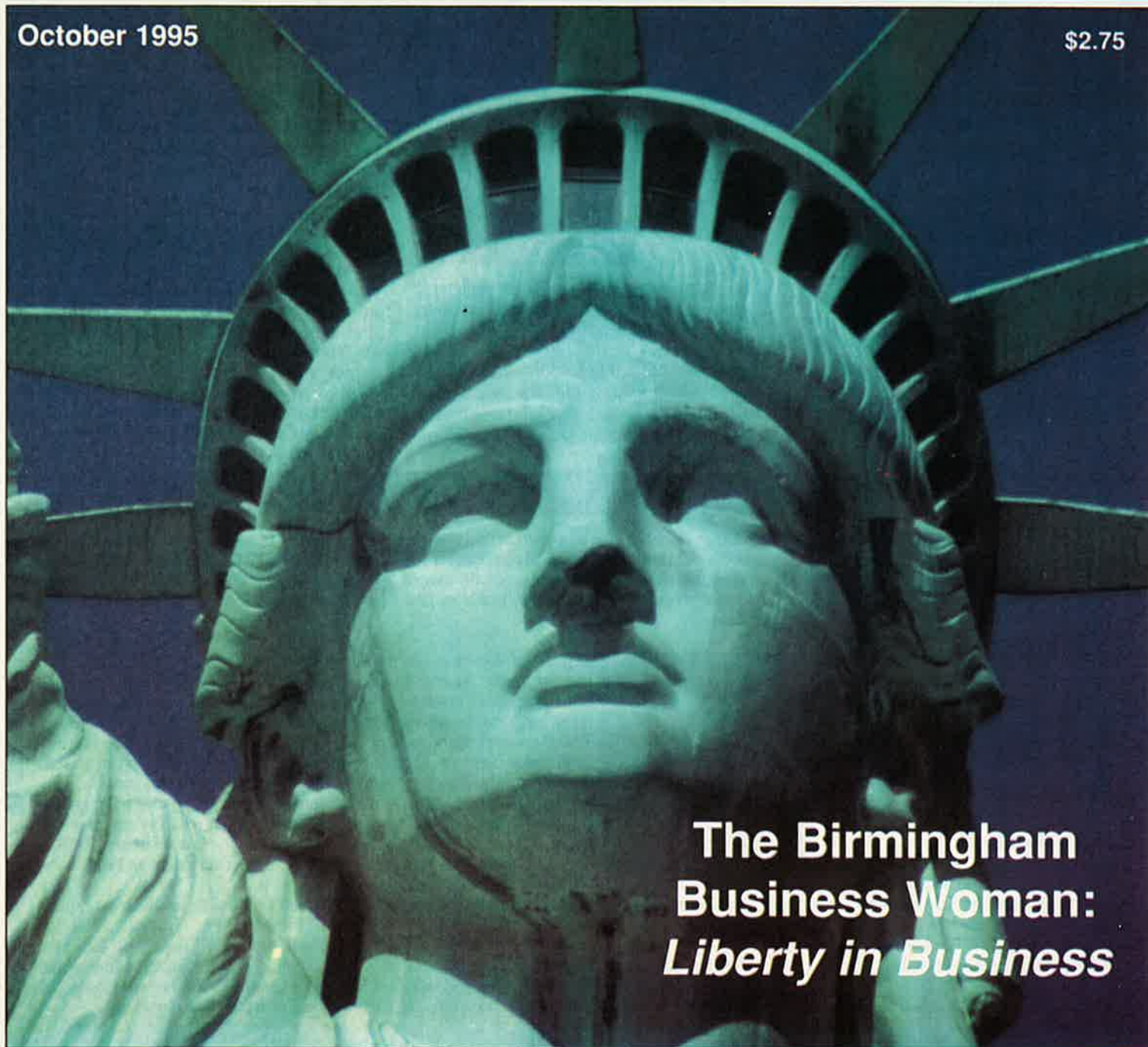
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS INC.

B I R M I N G H A M

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The Birmingham
Business Woman:
Liberty in Business



Profile: Thriving Professional Women in Birmingham

by Eric Pruitt

The business world is full of successes, and many of those successes can be traced to competent women who have business savvy and a keen sense of what works. The women described below have the perseverance and experience to make themselves and their chosen careers successful - for some, even in the face of setbacks.

**JUDITH C. WATSON,
PRESIDENT, SORRA RESEARCH
CENTER, INC.**

Judith C. Watson joined SORRA Research Center in 1990 as vice president, and in a short time established herself as the person able to move the firm into solid success.

SORRA, Inc., was founded in 1988 on the innovative concept of clinical trial management to provide the critical link between the physician and the pharmaceutical industry's need for excellence in clinical evaluation of new products. In order to do that, it secures contracts, subcontracts with qualified physicians and provides trained clinical research coordinators for the daily conduct of research.

But in 1990, SORRA's future was in question during the dissolution of the founding partnership. On advice of the Service Corps of Retired Executives

(SCORE), the corporation was accepted as a tenant in the Birmingham Business Assistance Network (BBAN).

The move proved to be beneficial to the company, since it was able to use accounting, secretarial and legal support from BBAN. SORRA later was able to engage its own attorney who is also a registered pharmacist, an accountant and an independent bookkeeper.



But more needed to be done, and Watson, who was responsible for marketing, administration and financial restructuring, brought the necessary insight and experience to help.

Before joining SORRA, she had already established herself as a clinical research coordinator, owner and director of a professional research center and as a clinical research associate who monitored and audited national clinical trials for the pharmaceutical industry. She also experienced the dissolution of SORRA's partnership, giving her extra insight into the hard work it takes to become successful.

Her energy, commitment and conviction moved SORRA forward - into five new locations, a 700 percent increase in staff, a 1000 percent increase in gross sales and the establishment of a research network. SORRA's list of clients has grown to include the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers, and the company has been awarded the SCORE "Success Story of the Year" and the "Business Incubator Graduate of the Year" by the National Business Incubator Association.

As for Watson, her company has been awarded the WBOC Recognition Award and Business Incubator Graduate of the Year. She is also involved in several civic activities, including the Adopt-a-School program at Norwood Elementary School and Junior Achievement, a board member of the Women's Business Ownership Council and the preteen director of the Alabama Chapter of National Campers and Hikers Association.

**DEBORAH L. STEPHENS,
PRESIDENT AND CEO, BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.**

Deborah L. Stephens is president of a company deeply involved in the wave of the future of health care - providing managed healthcare services through a preferred provider network to more than 40 Alabama-based businesses, with operations extending across 31 states.

She was the principal founding member of Behavioral Health Systems, Inc., in Birmingham, and has more than 18 years of experience in healthcare finance and administration. She formerly served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of both a 100-bed hospital and its parent holding company in Milwaukee, Wis.

She is accustomed to achieving in the male-

dominated field. She was cited in 1984 by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals as one of 11 women nationally to hold a vice president status or higher in the hospital field.



Behavioral Systems has boasted many successes since Stephens' involvement, including growth to 70,000 covered members, 2,500 providers and 21 employees. The company devised a third-party computerized claims administration system, and produced a client savings averaging 50 to 70 percent

for the first year and a 100 percent client retention rate.

She has also received national recognition for her work in multi-corporate planning and reorganization, zero-based budgeting and physical

rehabilitation finance. She is included in the 1993-95 editions of "Who's Who of American Women," and the 1994 "Who's Who of Science and Engineering."

Stephens is a graduate of the University of Iowa, with post-graduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She completed the Western Institute of Healthcare Executives program at the University of California-Berkeley.

She has been an active director on more than seven governing boards, has authored and conducted numerous national articles and presentations, and served on an advisory committee to the Department of Health and Human Services on healthcare prospective payment issues.

Her civic and community involvement organizations, includes the Rotary Club of Birmingham, Business Council of Alabama, Venture Club and the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time, she enjoys jogging, traveling and reading.