

# Dr. Pamela Ryan Tingari Silverton Foundation

Entrepreneur of Year Awards Speech  
June 5, 2014

**Good evening everyone.** It is my privilege to be here tonight representing the **Tingari Silverton Foundation** to honor this year's entrepreneurial changemakers, particularly, a very special changemaker who has profoundly impacted social entrepreneurship ... not just here in Central Texas, but around the world.

Some of you may know that the word **Tingari** is an Australian Aboriginal word literally meaning "Songlines." Songlines are the sacred spiritual and physical journeys of Aboriginal men and women across the vast Australian outback (typically with newly initiated young adults). These songs guide young and old Indigenous Australians in their navigation of the harsh landscape – signaling landmarks, waterholes and sacred sites. In singing their land, their history, their culture, their laws, their dreamings – the Aboriginal people are literally singing who they are, who they are in relation to the land, who they have been, and who they will be in the future. These sacred spiritual singing journeys link current generations with past and future generations, as they have done for tens of thousands of years.

I noted last year that these annual Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are the entrepreneurial songlines of Central Texas. **Songlines are essentially the sharing of knowledges** – knowledges about values; how to interpret signals from the landscape; how to be resilient in tough conditions, how to survive and thrive. Knowledges that the Michael Dells, Nav Sooches, Brian Sharples, Joe Aragonas, Laura Kilcreases, Margo Weisses and Suzie Sosa's of our Texas entrepreneurial community have modeled, as do all of you being honoured tonight.

Songlines also relate **changes**: changes in values, changes in what is important.. Over ten years ago, our Tingari Silverton Foundation initiated the **Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award** to affirm the importance of entrepreneurs who dedicate their efforts to assisting those of us facing some of life's worst predicaments. This year, upon reflecting on a decade of honoring **social** entrepreneurs, our Foundation is changing its own songline: we have joined forces with the **Institute For The Future**, a non-profit research institute in Palo Alto, California to gather

knowledges from the world's leaders in this field, exploring emerging trends relating to entrepreneurship with social impact, and how those trends might morph into positive futures for more people on the planet in say .. 2025 .... Because in 2015 .. **there will still be almost a billion people living on less than \$1.25 a day**, more than a billion people enduring incomprehensible physical, psychosocial, political hardships.

While our futures research is in its infancy, one clear trend is the **unprecedented convergence of business and social Songlines**. This convergence of business and social Songlines is accompanied by the **emergence of a powerful global conscience** enabled by our planet-wide instantaneous electronic connectedness..... The voices against injustices are growing .... ever stronger Songlines decrying poverty and inequity joining forces with Songlines of collective action ...

The emergence of a global conscience and increased worldwide action to improve the lot of those less fortunate, is being fuelled in part by **the rise of the Millennial generations -- Gen Y's and the first wave of Gen Z's (or ZZZ's)**. By 2025, Millennials will constitute 75% of the US workforce. According to a recent Brookings Institute analysis, **Millennials could literally "upend Wall St and corporate America ..."** Unlike their predecessors, American **Millennials are less concerned with individual success and more concerned with advancing the welfare of the group.**<sup>1</sup> They want to work for, invest in, or patronise companies whose missions change the world for the better. Even without awareness of solid research data showing social responsibility being good for the financial bottom line, Millennials' attitudes and actions demand BOTH business and social impact ... and **Millennials are already putting their time and money where their values are** ... more are investing away from banks, away from Wall Street, and **into** the social impact sector. Millennials are already changing classrooms, conference rooms and boardrooms. ... And women are playing a crucial role in these trends.... Last year, *The Economist Magazine* noted that on a global basis, **the increased employment of women around the world has contributed much more to global growth than China.**

Combine the rise of the more socially and environmentally conscious Millennials with other generations re-examining their lives, we are seeing a surge in the "purpose driven" life as

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<sup>1</sup> [Morley Winograd and Michael Hais](#) *How Millennials Could Upend Wall Street and Corporate America*

more people embrace the notion that **doing good for others is one of the single biggest contributors to personal peace, happiness and well being**. We know from research since 9/11 however, that merely attempting to “do good” service to others can cause far more harm than good. I have seen in my own work in Haiti, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Uganda how **even our presence, no matter how well intended**, can distort local economies, inflate prices of goods and services, and contribute to social and political fractures, further exacerbating economic, physical and psychosocial hardship.

In the most positive future of 2025, the **converged business and social impact Songlines** are seamlessly integrated - the **Songlines of respect and empowerment, Songlines focused on the greater good** that were once mostly associated with the social entrepreneurship domain, constituting the loudest, most dominating voices and entrepreneurial actions.

In light of these transformations in social impact entrepreneurship... this year ... we wanted to honor a person who has been at the forefront of emerging trends, who has seen changes coming and who embodies the attitudes and values of the next generations. We wanted to honor a Central Texan who is a **thought leader, a changemaker, an influencer, a nurturer and facilitator of fellow and fledgling entrepreneurs tackling some of the planet's most wicked social and environmental challenges**. Of so many outstanding social entrepreneurial changemakers in Central Texas, our Foundation judges selected Suzi Sosa....

[After film]

As we saw in the film, Suzi Sosa has contributed to social impact entrepreneurship from many fronts, whether building the social entrepreneurship program for students at the University of Texas, leading the Dell Social Innovation Challenge, or starting a new exciting social impact competition initiative, Verb, ... In facilitating and nurturing literally thousands of entrepreneurs working on products or services that help the disadvantaged and underserved ... **Suzi Sosa has humbly, but palpably contributed to the creation of new future Songlines for humanity** – positive futures for our planet in which more and more people, regardless of geography, gender, religion or politics, have more opportunities to fulfill their own unique potential ... It is my deep honor, on behalf of the Tingari Foundation to honor and thank you, Suzi Sosa ... **the Social Entrepreneurial Changemaker of 2014**.