

STAFFORD TO HEAD RUSSIAN BUSINESS ACADEMY CREDENTIALS PROGRAM AT FORSYTH TECH

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (February 21, 2006) —Suzanne Stafford has been promoted to director/trainer of international corporate training with Forsyth Technical Community College's Corporate and Continuing Education's Community & Economic Development Department. She will be responsible for coordinating the college's international training efforts.

Stafford is no stranger to international relationships. Prior to joining Forsyth Tech, Stafford owned a consulting business in which she assisted American companies wanting to open businesses in the former Soviet Union. At Forsyth Tech, she helped oversee a U.S. State Department grant for an exchange between the former Soviet Union and the United States.

Stafford's first project will be with GAZPROM Corporation of Russia. Forsyth Tech and GAZPROM will offer a two-week Business Academy Credentials Program for foreign nationals hosted by the Volgograd College of Oil and Gas in Volgograd, Russia. The new program, accredited by the Russian Federation, was established to promote foreign business in Russia and is among the country's first efforts to provide the legal certification that Russian Federation law requires for foreign nationals to conduct business in that country. GAZPROM is the world's largest producer of oil and gas, with 500,000 employees.

Stafford can be contacted at (336) 734-7906 or sstafford@forsythtech.edu.

Forsyth Technical Community College offers associate degrees, diplomas and certificates in more than 150 programs of study. Forsyth Tech's Corporate and Continuing Education programs promote personal and professional development with non-credit courses and seminars and provide customized training for business and industry. Forsyth Tech serves more than 30,000 students with approximately 1,150 full-and part-time faculty.



Suzanne Stafford

New Frontiers of Employment Discrimination

By Mia Brydie and Debra Carr

You like me, right now you like me!

If you aren't an Oscar Awards fan, you probably don't know who shouted these words during her acceptance speech in 1985. But you probably do know the feeling of wanting to be liked. Most of us are consumed with being beautiful, hip, rich, and in style—likeable. Fortunately for African Americans, our music, our men, and our hips and lips are what's "in"—even though most people would not want to actually be Black in America. They like us—but only for "right now."

But what if they don't like you.

Have you ever needed a job, were well qualified, had an excellent and truthful resume, but could not get an interview because—"we regret to inform you that according to your personality test results, you are not suitable for employment with us at this time." Personality test?

It gets better. In the British Isles police academy candidates must take personality tests to determine if they are racists. Yes, racism is bad, but this sounds a bit like the "write the preamble to the constitution" and "count the bubbles in a bar of soap" tests used at election board offices across America years ago. If racism were a hiring factor in America, nobody—red and yellow, black and white—would have a job.

The reality is that most of us like people who are like us. We sit with them, eat with them, and attend church with them. When I was in college, the students self-segregated during meals in the cafeteria. The problem is that limited social interactions lead to limited social skills. We get offended at the way certain ethnicities talk with their hands, or others don't make eye contact. Some others may be so expressive that they seem insubordinate. This may have been what happened to my friend Debra.

In Debra's Own Words

I worked for Best Job Inc. (BJI) for nine years. The job was great. We had medical benefits, paid time off; we had core values, a mission statement, and an open door policy where an employee could talk to management without fear of retaliation. The last two years, found myself fighting for my rights as an employee. I tried resolving the concerns with my immediate managers but it always led to Human Resource and changes were made on my behalf. I would not allow management to put false information in my employment file; I was considered a problem. Eventually I was let go.

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

Continued from Page 1

She hopes that through education we might be able to diminish its affect on our community.

It is evident when talking to her that she really cares about her patients and her community. Dr. Powell says, "I want to empower people to learn more about themselves through our holistic approach. If we search our history we will discover this is the way we have done it for thousands of years. The name of the practice, "House of Life," comes from ancient Egypt where people like Imhotep used the same name for their holistic healing practices. Why are we the sickest people when we used to be the healthiest?"

The House of Life Family Practice's goal is to "empower people to live healthy lives through a holistic approach to medicine. Unlike some physicians, her goal is to prevent you from having to take medications, be placed in the hospital, or endure surgery when there are other viable options. She wants to change our mindsets. If she can change our thinking from unhealthy thinking to healthy thinking, from thinking sickness to thinking wellness, we're well on our way to becoming a healthier people."

Dr. Michelle Powell was born in New York and raised in Florida. She has been here for six years. She attended Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and completed her residency at Duke University. She ran a practice in Lexington for three years before opening her current practice in February 2006.

As an individual who is currently searching for a good primary physician and prefers African-American doctors because they seem to be more attentive to my needs and concerns as an African-American male, I am glad to know she is in town. Is there a doctor in the house? Yes there is and her name is Dr. Michelle Powers!

House of Life Family Practice can be reached is located at 1800 Hawthorne Rd. in Winston-Salem. They can be reached at 765-3430.

Website address: www.life.familydoctors.net

Email address: houseoflife1800@bellsouth.net

Legal vs. Illegal Discrimination

EEOC says its mission is "the elimination of illegal discrimination from the workplace." Why not get rid of all employment discrimination? Why not force employers to have legitimate reasons to terminate the employment arrangement. We have been led to believe that here in NC we work at-will—end of story. That however, is not the case. Employers must not discriminate against workers for following public policy or for being in an EEOC protected class. These classes are constantly expanding and other states have two other exceptions to employment-at-will. North Carolina can broaden its labor law also.

Even though I am over forty, African-American, a woman, and felt retaliated against, EEOC says my termination was not discrimination. However, it was wrongful. BJI and I had what other states call a "Covenant of Good Faith." I relocated hours away from my family with BJI to this area, was a supervisor, had developed special skills just for this position at BJI, and I had been with the company almost a decade. We had an implied contract that precluded the NC employment-at-will standard.

Everything must change

There was a time when slaves toiled for local tobacco and cotton companies, and local banks profited off slave misery. There was a time when paid laborers worked from 8am to 7pm with a thirty-minute break for seven days a week with no overtime pay. There was a time when women were beat and raped on the job with no recourse. There was a time when workers had no toilets and were locked in plants. There was a time in America where 100 industrial workers died daily in the harsh work conditions.

There was a rainy day in 1968 when two Black sanitary workers were crushed to death in a Memphis trash truck. Jim Crow did not allow them to seek shelter in a white neighborhood. These situations have changed thanks to individual citizens who took the challenge. Things can change and we have to change them.

Victories Do Unfold

If you think you may have been discriminated against at work, file an EEOC complaint in person at the office in Greensboro today. If you are still not satisfied keep a journal and consult an attorney that specializes in Civil Rights and Labor.

Also, support North Carolina workers like Debra. Email and call your North Carolina state senator and representative today. Ask for the "implied contract" and the "covenant of good faith" exceptions to the employment-at-will standard in this state.

And yes Sally Fields, I liked you, especially in Smokey and the Bandit.