

Written by Patricia Turnier
Friday, 17 August 2012 14:43



Mrs. Bonnie St. John is the first African-American to win medals in a Winter Paralympic competition as a ski racer. This accomplishment was the first for a Black Olympian whether for the Paralympic or Olympic. In the 1984 Winter Paralympics in Innsbruck, Austria, Mrs. St. John obtained a bronze medal in the slalom, a bronze medal in the giant slalom, and a silver medal for overall performance. Thus, she became the second fastest female in the world on one leg that year.

Mrs. St. John grew up in San Diego, C.A. She had pre-femoral focal disorder which resulted in the amputation of her right leg above the knee when she was 5-years-old. Despite this challenge, and thanks to her resilience, she excelled as an athlete, a scholar, a mother and a businesswoman. She graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 1986. Mrs. St. John won the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship for Oxford University where she got her M.Litt. diploma in economics in 1990.

During the Clinton administration, she worked in the White House as Director of the National Economic Council. Mrs. St. John is the CEO of Courageous Spirit, Inc. She is also a best-selling author, having penned and published six books: *Succeeding Sane: Making Room For Joy In A Crazy World*, *Getting Ahead At Work Without Living Your Family Behind*, *Money: Fall Down? Get Up!*, *How Strong Women Pray*, *Live Your Joy and How Great Women Lead*

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In February 2007, Mrs. St. John was honored at the White House by President George W. Bush for Black History Month. The former President said: "[Mrs. Bonnie St. John] is the kind of person that you really want to be around, and the kind of person that shows that individual courage matters in life." She has been featured on a nationwide Starbucks beverage cup with the quote "I was ahead in the slalom. But in the second run, everyone fell on a dangerous spot. I was beaten by a woman that got up faster than I did. I learned that people fall down, winners get up, and gold medal winners just get up faster."

NBC Nightly News declared that Mrs. St. John is "One of the five most inspiring women in America". She was featured on The Today Show, Good Morning America, CNN, Montel, Charles Kuralt, the Discovery Health Channel, The Tavis Smiley Show, etc. Leading publications such as *The New York Times*, *People*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *O* magazines have profiled Mrs. St. John and noted her extraordinary achievements. Dennis Kimbro and Napoleon Hill's best-seller, *Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice* tells the inspiring story of Mrs. St. John who is a highly sought motivational speaker and author. She has won several awards. In this regard, she is an Essence honoree.

The last book *How Great Women Lead* was written by Mrs. Bonnie St. John and her teenage daughter, Darcy Deane, an honor student at High School North in New Jersey. In addition, Miss Deane takes courses in the Education Program for Gifted Youth online through Stanford University, where she founded a virtual global *Model United Nations* club. This brilliant teenager was home schooled until sixth grade and traveled extensively throughout all 50 states, as well as many countries abroad. Miss Deane is interested in a career as a linguistic anthropologist. She also studies Mandarin, Spanish and ancient Greek and is thinking about taking Arabic courses. In addition, she penned a beautiful piece for *Essence* magazine in May 2012 to celebrate Mother's Day.

Their latest book *How Great Women Lead* is a very original concept because we seldom hear the voice of teenagers as authors. The book is a mother-daughter adventure into the lives of twenty women shaping the world, such as the Nobel Laureate Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia; Academy Award actress Geena Davis; Amy Pascal, Co-Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment; Dr. Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., and so on. *How Great Women Lead* is powerful

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because it can engage other parents with their teenagers through similar experiences and it has the capacity to initiate many interesting discussions related to female leadership. The bold grandmother of Miss Deane, Dr. Fay Deane,

First Woman Dairy Company Chairman

, is also featured in the book. This sends another powerful message that it is possible to be successful at any age. In this regard, the book showcases the opinion of females of different generations.

How Great Women Lead

is well-written and depicts a variety of successful females in different realms. The authors share the thoughts of myriad women with the world. Hence, the book is very informative and uplifting.

It features females from all walks of life, from various origins who talks about leadership.

Several among them broke the glass ceiling in their field and this makes the book even more compelling to read about their professional path. Some of the female stories will move you to tears. It should be translated into several languages.

To summarize, Mrs. St. John wears many hats. She is an author, inspirational speaker, executive coach, TV personality, mother, businesswoman and seeker of wisdom. Mrs. St. John has suffered through many difficulties: sexual abuse, divorce, disability and struggles related to gender and race. For instance, she broke a new artificial leg on a soccer field, fell in a cafeteria because of walkways which were gravel. Despite these hurdles, she has relentlessly sought ways to stay positive and live joyfully no matter what life dishes out. Her message of falling down and getting up—in life is very inspiring. She is a great example of perseverance and boldness. Her deep sense of serenity and joy in life has inspired millions of people who want to know her secrets about what she has learned regarding finding happiness in spite of obstacles.

Mrs. St. John is a globetrotter. She is a spokesperson, and has touched the hearts of many people. As a motivational speaker, she lectures on a regular basis for companies like Pepsi, AT&T and Merrill Lynch. Mrs. St. John leads seminars and researches for various writing projects. She makes regular personal appearances at schools, homeless shelters, community groups and other organizations in hundreds of locations while traveling for corporate clients. During the winter, she coaches disabled ski racers for the Adaptive Sports Foundation in New York. At the 2002 Paralympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, Mrs. St. John was asked to make a speech for the opening ceremonies. Before the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she served as one of a handful of Paralympic Ambassadors who helped train American athletes going to China to be positive representatives of the United States. In 2010, she represented anew her country as a member of President Obama's official delegation to the Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

The following interview was done last spring and is the first Canadian media which spoke to Mrs. St. John about her latest book. By the Editress-in-Chief Patricia Turnier, LL.M (Master's

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degree in Law).

[How Great Women Lead is part of our Top 20 Books for Summer 2012: http://megadiversities.com/index.php?option=com_content]
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PATRICIA TURNIER TALKS TO BONNIE ST. JOHN:

P.T. How did you feel when you won the silver medal in the 1984 Winter Paralympics for overall performance? Also, how has your life changed since then?

B. St. J. I think was in shock when I first won one the medal [laughs]. I wasn't expecting to win. I was the third ranked on the U.S. team and nobody (including myself) expected that I would win. My life has changed because this achievement allowed me to do so many other things. It

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gave me credentials to make other contributions. It definitely opened other doors. It allowed me to go to college, to obtain a scholarship and to have great jobs. My winning also gave me the opportunity to stand up for causes which were dear to me.

P.T. It is amazing that you became the first Black athlete in the world ever to win medals, whether in Paralympics or Olympics, as a ski racer. I tried Alpine skiing between the age of 10 and 14. I was becoming very good at it but I stopped for 10 years and after I became too fearful to continue. I even hurt my coccyx very badly after a few falls; it was almost broken when I was 24 [laughs]. The word “impossible” must not be part of your vocabulary. What is the secret for your bravery and what is your message for people who think they can’t achieve their dream goals because of their own insecurities and/or because of naysayers?

B. St. J. During my career as an athlete, I often trained alongside able-bodied people in arenas designed exclusively for them, where the facilities were minimal. It was challenging. Watching able-bodied athletes be recruited and groomed for the Olympics taught me to be my own best advocate, to think critically about my decisions, and to pursue my dreams with passion. All these experiences shaped me to perform.

I think a lot of people don’t realise that it wasn’t because I had no fears. I did the Paralympics with fears that I overcame. In other words, I had fears, but not to the degree to paralyse me. I accomplished my Paralympics’ goals in spite of it. My physical adversity taught me that the key to winning is not just bouncing back from obstacles, but doing so faster than my competitors. It is important to be positive and have confidence in your goals because there are a lot of naysayers. Some of them already surrendered and project their own insecurities and defeats on other people. You have to learn to exude your own joy and positivity. I wrote the book *Live Your Joy* which covers these themes. I am not immune to discouragement; it is a question of daily practices. I have to work out being positive just like everybody else to help me give the best performance in any situation.

In my book, *Getting Ahead At Work*, I talk about the imagination and determination that I used with the visualization and stress-reduction techniques to push past the limitations of disability and become a Silver Medal Winner in downhill skiing in the 1984 Paralympics. Moreover, The NBS National Brotherhood of Skiers gave me financial and emotional support that helped me get to the Paralympics.

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People have to find the confidence within themselves to challenge their comfort zones, discover tools for positive action and have a focused plan for contributing to organization-wide growth with development.

P.T. I love the statement that your daughter shared with *Essence* magazine in the May 2012 issue: “I thought about the time my mother fell flat on the slopes in her Olympic race. “People fall down”, she later told me. “Winners get up”. This powerful quote of yours was also on the nationwide Starbucks beverage cup ad.

P.T. Do you believe in this quote: “No one can rise higher than his or her faith”?

B. St. J. There are people who really strive for titles, jobs, material possessions and so on. However, I think you can be very hollow even if you’ve had great accomplishments in the world. I think that you don’t rise higher than your faith in the sense of how much hope, aliveness, fullness and love can you have if you don’t have faith. So in that sense, I believe in this quote.

On a more personal level, I have always loved books. When I was a child, my handicap prevented me from jumping rope and running with other kids so I read books on the playground. Later, when I became an Olympic ski champion, I read books on the chairlift in between runs. Despite my hurdles, since my childhood I always believed in myself and always found a way to grow spiritually and educationally. I always knew that being knowledgeable would open many doors to me in the future. It was constantly important to me to make the best of my situation.



P.T. You worked in the White House. During the Clinton administration, you had a high level position as a Director for the National Economic Council. Moreover, you knew how to circulate comfortably in the Ivy League (Harvard and Oxford) and Wall Street milieux. What advice do you have for minorities, females and the handicapped to move up the ladder in their fields?

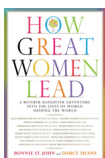
B. St. J. That is such an interesting question! I do circulate in different circles where my mother

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would have been uncomfortable. However, if I look back in the past, it wasn't easy for me to be at Harvard. I didn't have as much money as other people I met there. I had to work. I had a paying bartending job when other friends could afford to do pro bono work at the school's newspaper. At Oxford, it wasn't easy either to be a woman and a minority at the time, likewise for Wall Street. The key is to get comfortable, even if you are uncomfortable [laughs]. This is my advice. In other words, I learned to be courageous and surpass my insecurities. With one leg, it was not easy to use the stairs at the White House. The National Economic Council was not on the same floor as the National Economic Advisors. I had to navigate often on different floors. I was able to do a lot of things because I didn't focus on the hurdles that I was facing. I believe that the key to success is to focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. There is a saying: "A lot of people feel safest when they're in the middle of the herd." If you do what you always do, you will obtain what you are aiming for in your comfort zone. If you want to do something different and move up the ladder, you can feel uncomfortable. This creates a challenge and you have to take it positively to accomplish your objectives. Nobody has the same destiny. It is not because a certain group of people has not been able to accomplish a specific goal that the same will necessarily happen to you. Even if the statistics and structural obstacles in certain fields may be discouraging, it does not have the power to define the path of an individual. My life's philosophy is always to see the glass half full and not half empty. I believe that most people who become successful never lose sight of their goals when they face adversity. They managed to overcome their hurdles to pursue their objectives. So, my advice is to not let obstacles define you.

P.T. How did you feel when you were honored by President George W. Bush at the White House as part of the 2007 celebration of Black History Month?

B. St. J. It was nice to be in the White House as a guest instead of as an employee [laughs]. Seriously, it was a terrific recognition for me. I worked for Democrats at the White House and being awarded by a Republican President shows tolerance for different points of view and it makes me proud of being American. It is in America that a Black woman with humble beginnings and a disability can rise to become the first Olympian ski racer. I grew up in San Diego where there is no snow and I was able to get help via sponsors and so on. This is amazing. My country is able to give so many possibilities to people who are willing to work hard to achieve their dreams.



P.T. Your latest book How Great Women Lead is chiefly about female world leaders. Growing up who were the females you admired and why?

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B. St. J. My mother was certainly one of my role models. She passed away a couple of years ago. She grew up in the ghetto in NY. Her father left before she was born. Her mother didn't have an education beyond the fourth grade and was an alcoholic. My mother later in life finished her education and earned a Ph.D. She was also a high school principal. She taught me a lot about life and influenced me professionally. I always looked up to her.

P.T. This is amazing. I am always fascinated by people who have resilience and become successful by overcoming hurdles.

B. St. J. Thanks. My mother became a beloved leader in the education system. A doctoral thesis was written about her leadership style. The thesis of my mom concerned the desegregation of schools. When she passed away about five years ago, 300 people showed up at her funeral. She touched the lives of many people. My mother was definitely the main female role model while I was growing up. I would like to add that during my youth I admired Benjamin Franklin. I read his autobiography and he excelled in so many fields. Besides being a writer and an inventor, he was in politics, science, business, among other realms. Even if he wasn't a female (I am referring to your question), I wanted to follow in his footsteps. His career definitely inspired me. I wanted to succeed in different domains like him.

P.T. How did the original idea of taking a journey with your daughter to interview world female leaders come to fruition for your latest book?

B. St. J. It was really a collaborative concept between my daughter and I. At the beginning during the brainstorming process, I was thinking to chiefly interview top business and political women such as Hillary Clinton. My daughter suggested to broaden to other kinds of leaders with whom people could relate. I definitely agreed to that. We decided along the way about the questions we would ask, how we were going to conduct the interviews and so on. It was really definitely a collaborative process.

P.T. You and your daughter interviewed successful females from different realms for your book. The number one question was: How do you define leadership? So, I am going to ask you the same question and I would like to know if your definition of leadership changed after the completion of the book. If so, how?

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B. St. J. As I said earlier, at the beginning I was thinking more about leaders who are on top of large organizations (from Corporate America, etc.) and in the best positions in the government such as politicians. With time, we introduced so many different kinds of female leadership: the homemaker and mother of five, Cathy Sarubbi, the teenager Rishika Daryanani, the Human Rights Activist Dr. Denise Dresser, the Co-Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment, Amy Pascal, Sheryl Sandberg. The C.O.O of Facebook, etc. We wanted as much as possible to diversify, also in terms of ethnicity, by representing role models from other countries such as Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia. This process made me appreciate that as women we are leading everywhere at every levels in our communities as well as in the house of power.

P.T. I love it how you express this [Laughs].

B. St. J. After the completion of the book, I saw leadership in a larger scale: in communities, smaller organizations, schools and so on. In all cases, leaders are people who have a vision of how the world could be better on different platforms (communities, etc.). They share that higher vision and bring people together to achieve it. Often, these leaders develop other leaders and bring the best out of them. It is a pragmatic way to build for the future by making sure that there will be longevity with what they are implementing. So, I got a more broadened vision of leadership after the completion of the book. My definition of leadership is larger and more inclusive. Through this process, my daughter and I evolved a lot. It is amazing to see how involved we are as females to change the world in so many different settings and countries. This experience was definitely inspiring for us.

P.T. Earlier, you named Cathy Sarubbi. I think it is amazing that you included a stay at home mother because it seems this role has been devalued in the last decades to some extent, since females entered en masse the job market. I don't have children, but it must be the most important job and one of the most difficult to do.

B. St. J. It was very important for me to include a stay at home mom because my daughter didn't understand that role very well, and I definitely wanted to highlight it. When we interviewed Cathy Sarubbi, she discovered how dynamic she is. Mrs. Sarrubi had a career as a successful entrepreneur. She chose to stay home to take care of her children. She is very involved in the community by taking care also of other people's kids. It is another way of making a significant difference in the society and another type of leadership. The fact that we have mothers who make these choices, gives opportunities for females like me to have a career. I and other

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women benefit from that. We are all interconnected and we can't forget that. These females are looking out for the community and the children. Their role is very important and we need to acknowledge that. In fact, it is as important as everybody else's.

P.T. Did the book make you grow more as a woman after interviewing all these female leaders from all walks of life? If so, how did it change you?

B. St. J. [Silence]. I would say the biggest change after writing the book is the sense of urgency about women's leadership in our society. The females we interviewed are all doing something unique to make the world a better place. Many of them had to fight their way in to have the opportunity to lead. The solidarity between females is important to make it easier and allow the next generations of women to be able to continue to make their contribution. Furthermore, a diversity of genders and viewpoints is important because it gives balance and it will strengthen all of us.



P.T. What was the most fulfilling part of penning with your daughter?

B. St. J. It was great to hear her smart viewpoints, her observations and watching her grow. It was also nice to share different generational perspectives. I enjoyed watching my daughter interviewing with confidence those impressive female leaders. Darcy loves diversity. So, interviewing women from many parts of the world was very enriching for her and I am happy to see that this experience helps her develop professionally. She loves world history and languages. She is studying Chinese and Spanish. I would like to add that the former secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, further influenced my daughter to realize that language and culture are important skills for people in the future. It got her even more interested in studying linguistic anthropology as a way of understanding people and cultures, because it gives a global vision of the world. When we were at the summer camp, Seeds of Peace, in Maine to meet Leslie Lewin (the executive director of this camp), teenagers from all over the world were there to participate in a dialogue about peace. My daughter observed that some of the teenagers had to sit and have dinners with the enemies of their ancestors. They all brought different opinions and were able to be civil. Overall, the journey with my daughter was really enriching and it was a learning experience for both of us on many levels. I hope that our project will inspire other mother-daughters to do the same thing.

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P.T. In your latest book, the readers learn that you received over 500 suggestions (from Facebook, etc.) for women to interview. What were the criteria for the final choices? In addition, how long did it take you and your daughter to pen the book?

B. St. J. We really wanted to include a wide range of women. We sent out queries to the visitors of my website. We wanted a list of people they knew for feedback on who we should include in our book. We got so many responses. We did a spreadsheet and parsed our list to include women from different fields. We assessed the 500 suggestions we received. We categorized them mainly by occupations, age, region of the world and ethnicity. We really wanted the process to be inclusive and have a representative group. At the end, we had four continents covered. Many American women that we chose had a global perspective as well. We received several interesting suggestions from many men and women. It was not easy to make a final choice. I am convinced that twenty years ago, we would not have had a big inventory of females in terms of leadership. We chose several trailblazers who were firsts in their fields, such as Susan Rice, the first African-American woman U.S. Representative to the UN and the second youngest in this position. It was a big project, a three-years odyssey (because we had to travel) to complete the book and an adventure of a lifetime.

P.T. Regarding your latest book what is the general reaction so far from young readers, especially in your daughter's age group?

B. St. J. In April, my daughter and I spoke at a conference before 200 female teenagers. They were excited about our book because they perceived the women as role models. The fact that they looked like them made them feel that they could identify with these females. The teenagers felt that they were accessible to them and appreciated that we put diverse faces on leadership. They loved our adventure and really enjoyed how we covered the main theme of our book which is about leadership. The girls felt our passion. There are teenagers who said: "You made me want to try harder" or "You made me believe that I can be a leader". I noticed also that fathers care a lot about this subject. I heard them say they want to get our book for their daughters.

P.T. What message do you want the public to take away from your book?

B. St. J. This book on women leaders is about how far females have come in the world in terms

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of their achievements and how far they are able to go by inspiring the next generations. Our book is a mother-daughter investigation into leadership styles and structures. We want the readers to be excited about leadership and assess how they can be a positive influence in the world.

I also believe that the book raises strong questions that forces both genders and different generations to seriously contemplate. We would like men (who can give insight) to support women who are already a leader or who are inspiring to become one. I am talking about colleagues, friends, husbands and so on. For instance, there is an employer who told me that he will read my book because the women on his team complain that he talks most of the time about male topics such as football [laughs]. So, he wants our book to help him connect better with the females of his staff.



P.T. When you were about to meet the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with your daughter, you shared these moving thoughts in your latest book: “I looked over at my daughter and mused that this is the kind of experience my mother could never have given me when I was her age. A gathering of powerful women like this didn’t even exist back then, much less waltz its way into a bastion of male dominance like the U.S. State Department.” Females have made a lot of progress since the last decades in many realms. However, in the current election none of the candidates is a female. How do you think it will be possible for a woman to break the glass ceiling and become the President of the United States one day?

B. St. J. [Silence and laughs afterwards]. I feel that it is inevitable because so many females are highly qualified. I don’t see how it cannot happen in the future. Mrs. Clinton was so close to winning and now she holds the second most powerful job in America. I think that several females can qualify as candidates and we definitely need to support them. In 2005, Geena Davis played the first female president of the U.S. in the TV series *Commander in Chief*, so let’s hope this fiction will become a reality one day for a woman [laughs].

P.T. Do you have further writing projects with your daughter? If so, are you thinking of making a sequel of your latest book regarding female trailblazers?

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B. St. J. The current project that I have with my daughter is to make a difference for women around the world and help them to have opportunities to become leaders. One of the women in the book, Noemi Ocana from Nicaragua works for Opportunity International, one of the oldest and largest micro finance organizations in the world. Mrs. Ocana is the Nicaraguan Director of Microfinance Loans of Opportunity International. They also help people with savings, banking and insurance. They set up many mechanisms to insure financial stability. We are partnering with this organization to raise money and awareness, to insure that women around the world are able to create their own businesses, have more financial security and help them make a difference in their community. On our website www.howgreatwomenlead.com for our book, there is a link where our visitors can give their support:

<https://www.opportunity.org/give/project/womenlead>.

When we went to Nicaragua, we saw kids fighting over food. There is a sense of urgency in the world and we can't just stand by and do nothing. We have to do something.

P.T. There is a popular belief about females who achieve great success in their career regarding the fact that they have to make some sacrifices, like not having children. You managed to have it all. What message do you have for females who are struggling to find balance in the main spheres of their lives?

B. St. J. I think that one of the most important things is to be more conscious of the choices you are making. You can find ways in many cases to choose more balance. For instance, I know a female reporter who decided to stay home to take care of her new baby. Her newspaper proposed to her to write a weekly column and it perfectly fitted her new schedule. It actually became a promotion. I believe that it is a question of finding flexibility. Amy Pascal, the Co-Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment is a mother. She has a lot of responsibilities and flexibility because she is the boss. She created and incorporated a culture in her company where her staff can have balance. Susan Rice, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. has to travel often. She has to make a lot of sacrifices and fortunately for her she has a supportive and understanding husband. So, it makes things easier for her. The society and the family definitely need to be creative and supportive of women.

P.T. Your life story is highly inspiring. You are very resilient and you are considered a *sheroine* by many people. What actress would you like to portray yourself if one day your life becomes a movie? And tell us why.

B. St. J. I am going to choose Thandie Newton. I heard her once in an interview where she spoke about identity, otherness and differences. I was so moved by her thoughts regarding

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what separates us and what brings us together. I think that she is a great actress and that she could do a powerful job of a one-legged African-American from San Diego. It would also not hurt to see that someone as beautiful as Newton play my part [laughs]. In addition, we are about the same height.

P.T. I think that she was amazing in *Beloved*. She showed powerful emotions in this movie and could definitely do the same by portraying your character.

P.T. Do you have a final message for the readers of *Mega Diversities*?

B. St. J. I want to invite everyone to join the journey with us. It is not just a book, it is a movement to change the conversation about women's leadership around the world. There is a contest on our website www.howgreatwomenlead.com where people can nominate the female leaders they admire. It is a way to make people participate and contribute with their own opinion about whom is making a difference in this world.

I believe also that success can be defined differently by many people. I am happy that our book offers a wide range of fields where women have accomplished their goals. I hope it will inspire readers and the future generations to succeed in the domain of their choice.

P.T. Thank you so much for this great interview. In addition, thanks to you and your daughter for making the world discover several female trailblazers with your latest book. It was an honor to speak to you and we can't wait to read your next books!

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"Over the next several weeks we delved excitedly into this extensive catalog of extraordinary human beings. Darcy organized the proposals into a spreadsheet to track diversity across age, nationality, ethnicity, field of expertise, and more. With so many legitimate nominations, it looked as if we could write several books. I had never before fully appreciated the depth and breadth with which women are shaping the world today—more than any time in recorded history. This exercise further strengthened our resolve to laud these amazing stories as examples of the incredible capabilities of women as leaders."

Excerpted from *How Great Women Lead* p. 16

The book is available on www.amazon.com , .ca or www.barnesandnoble.com

Official Website: <http://www.bonniestjohn.com/>

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“I don’t hide my leg;
I show it off.
Looking ‘normal’ is
overrated.”

If you're short...

- Delicate knits won't overwhelm you.
- To-the-knee hem and bracelet-length sleeves avoid that droopy "bathrobe" look.
- No-closure style lets a coat hang straight down, so the body looks longer.
- Necklaces add more height by emphasizing the vertical line.

BODY TYPE: *Petite*

BONNIE ST. JOHN

AGE: 44 | **OCCUPATION:** Writer (latest book: *Live Your Joy*)

At 5'2", St. John worried that she'd be swamped by a sweater-coat, but this silver-flecked knit (Eileen Fisher, \$238) is "sheer, loosely woven...it floats!" So does this ebullient survivor: A skiing medalist in the 1984 Paralympics (her leg was amputated when she was 6), St. John is matter-of-fact about her prosthetic and loves the contrast between its "mechanical look" and her sequined skirt (Sir Alistair Rai, \$630). Thanks to her adjustable ankle, St. John says these glamorous heels (Talbots) are the highest she's worn. "I feel so tall!" she says. Inside and out, St. John has stature. Shells, Eileen Fisher, \$168 (cream) and \$138 (black). Earrings, Ann Taylor. Necklace, Costello Tagliapietra. Bracelet, available at Jennifer Miller.

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