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**Former First Lady Michelle Obama Encourages Women to Use their Voices, Advocate for Others**

*12,000 Attend Mrs. Obama's Main Stage Conversation with Shonda Rhimes*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** - In a wide-ranging conversation at the 14th annual Pennsylvania Conference for Women with writer, producer, and bestselling author Shonda Rhimes, former First Lady Michelle Obama discussed women's struggles with confidence, risk-taking and failure. "I am constantly telling women to speak up. Don't waste your seat at the table. If you are not going to use your voice, give it up to someone who will," Mrs. Obama told a sold-out audience of more than 12,000. "You get a seat at the table and you realize that the people around it are no smarter or better than you." She also discussed parenting challenges and her adjustment to private life after eight years in the White House. The event concluded with a surprise video tribute by former President Barack Obama, on the couple's 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

This year's conference also featured keynote addresses by Dr. Brené Brown, courage and vulnerability researcher, #1 *New York Times* best-selling author, and one of the top five most viewed TED speakers in the world; Shawn Achor, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Happiness Advantage*; and Carla Harris, Wall Street executive and author.

The nonpartisan, nonprofit conference is the largest personal and professional networking event for women in the tri-state area, featuring more than 100 thought leaders and industry experts from across the country in the fields of business, philanthropy, health, finance, media and professional development.

"We are proud to have become Pennsylvania's must-attend event for women, men and anyone who advocates for social, workplace and political equality for women," said Leslie Stiles, President of the Pennsylvania Conference for Women Board. "We hope our attendees will be able to take the extraordinary experiences and learnings from this day and apply them to their lives and in their communities all year long."

The Pennsylvania Conference for Women is presented by [Beneficial Bank](#) and [Beneficial Foundation](#) and generously sponsored by [Bristol-Myers Squibb](#); [Cisco](#); [Drexel University LeBow College of Business](#); [GlaxoSmithKline](#); [Johnson & Johnson](#); [PECO](#); [Prudential](#); [QVC Inc.](#); [State Farm](#); [JPMorgan Chase](#); [DuPont](#); [Macquarie Investment Management](#); [Mastercard](#); [Penn Mutual](#); [State Street Corporation](#); [Villanova School of Business](#); [AARP Pennsylvania](#); [ACME Markets](#); [Amtrak](#); [Bentley Systems](#); [Comcast NBCUniversal](#); [DLA Piper LLP \(US\)](#); [The Dow Chemical Company](#); [Erin Condren](#); [Fine Wine & Good Spirits](#); [Merck](#); [Pepper Hamilton LLP](#); [PNC](#); [Shriners Hospitals for Children](#); [The Philadelphia Foundation](#); [United Airlines](#); [UPMC Health Plan](#); [Vanguard](#); and media sponsors [WPVI-TV 6abc](#); [iHeartMedia](#); [Philadelphia Magazine](#); [Philadelphia Media Network](#); and [Tierney](#).

"We are honored once again to support this remarkable event where women can explore possibilities, make new connections, and find their voices," said Joanne Ryder, Executive Vice President and Chief Administration Officer, Beneficial Bank. "The mission of the Pennsylvania Conference for Women to promote and amplify the influence of women in the workplace and beyond aligns perfectly with our values at Beneficial Bank."

To learn more about the 14th annual Pennsylvania Conference for Women, visit our website at [www.paconferenceforwomen.org](http://www.paconferenceforwomen.org), follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/PAWomen> or visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/paconferenceforwomen>. Photos of the event are available from [Getty Images](#).

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