

SoHo

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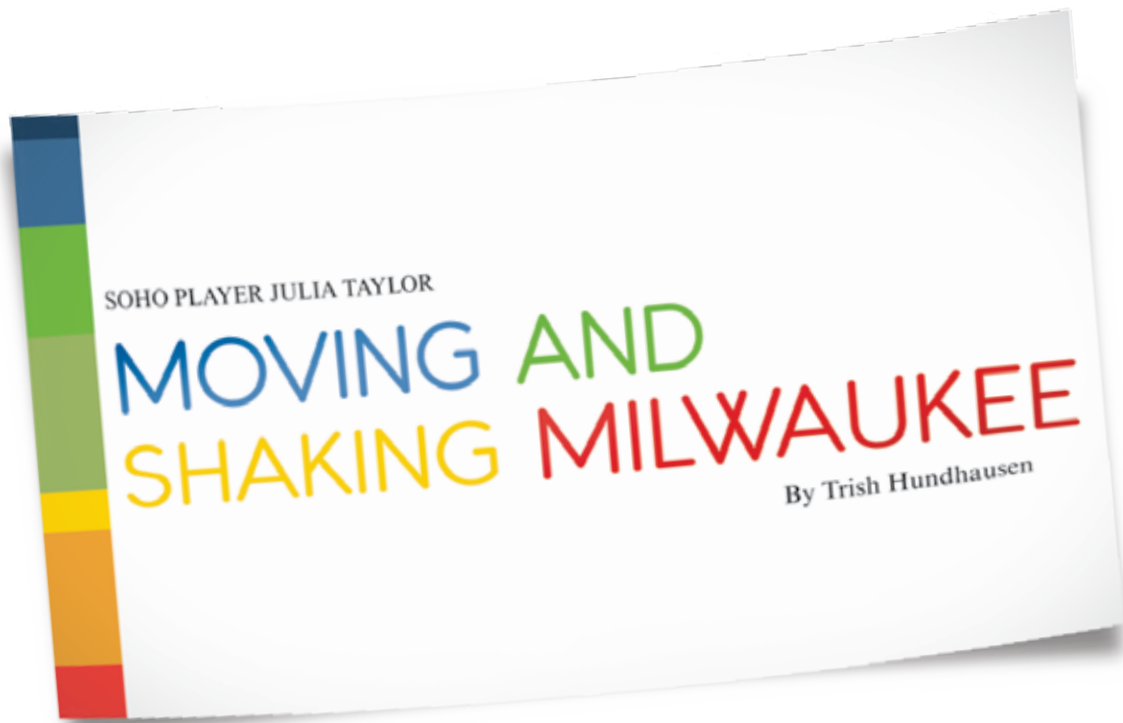
MOVING AND SHAKING MILWAUKEE

SOHO PLAYER JULIA TAYLOR

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THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
THE GREATER
MILWAUKEE
COMMITTEE
IS A VERY
BUSY WOMAN.



Julia Taylor is constantly on the move, working hard to connect the leaders of the community to get great things accomplished.

She's been active in the community for many years and has worked for the YWCA for 16. There, she had the privilege to discover how communities are shaped, what makes them great, how people get connected, and conversely, how they become disconnected. She worked on employment training, public policy and advocacy, and with issues of racial justice and economic development at a community-based level.

Her role with the GMC has allowed her to work on similar issues, albeit at a different level.

“Our mission is to create a region that is a great place to live, work, play, grow and learn,” Taylor said. “So the passion of it is knowing that we are working to make people’s lives better, and we’re making Milwaukee a better place to live.”

Taylor also expressed how much she enjoys the people she works with. Her members are industry leaders that care deeply about Milwaukee.

“My organization (of 60 years), it’s one of the oldest in the country of its kind. It’s a civic business organization that creates a platform for the different constituencies to come together and make change. Another point of passion is simply being able to see the results that come about when people who care work on solving issues together.”

Her passion for the community is evident by her dedication to its people and projects. One of the longest running projects – about six years for Taylor – has been that of getting a Regional Transit Authority established. Taylor says Gov. Jim Doyle’s budget that was released earlier this year included the language for the RTA, which was a great step forward.

“We’ve had an RTA study in place, but this language cements things, and so will allow us to link up our transit throughout three counties,” Taylor said. “It will be funded with a dedicated funding source, a tacit sales tax. Regionally, people have been working on a commuter rail project for 19 years, so to see this take place is huge. Another major project is the water industry. The School of Fresh Water Sciences at UWM was also included in the budget. We’re working hard to help the water industry grow, aiming to create new technologies and new jobs, providing a better place to live, cleaner water and cleaner beaches.”

When asked what challenges growing businesses will face over the next several years, Taylor replied, “The economy makes things difficult, but it also presents opportunities. Milwaukee is diversified and stable, and so has the ability to sustain.

“The struggle,” she said, “will be in getting people to invest in things that make this a place in which we want to live. Throughout the years, Milwaukee has always invested in its cultural assets. This is an economic cycle and we’ll get through it. Over the next two years, the task is being able to get Milwaukee to recognize the strengths we have, and to believe in ourselves.

“There are big companies here that are really innovative – Johnson Controls, for example. And frankly, being innovative seems to be the only way that big companies can survive here. But so are the smaller companies. We’re blessed to have both. The main task is combining these two parts of the economy so that they can grow together. Milwaukee is fortunate. We have great people and great opportunities. Many people in other areas would be grateful to have what we have, so it’s important for everyone to recognize that and to celebrate it.”



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