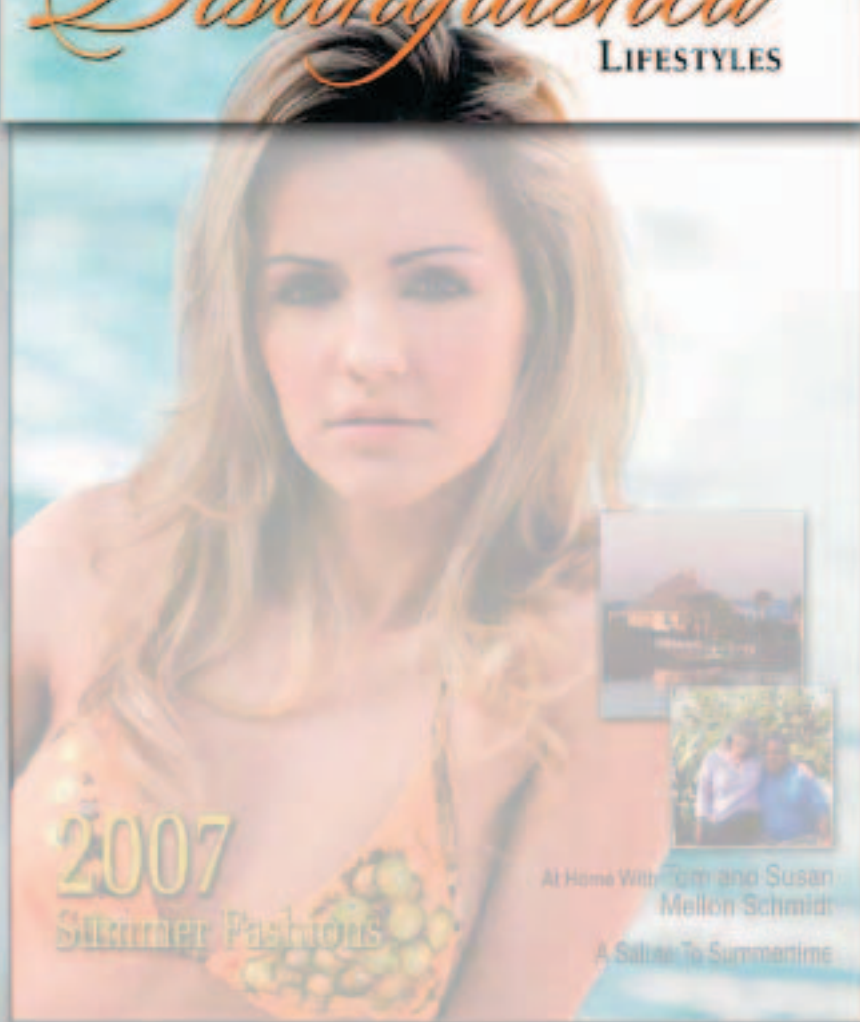


Distinguished LIFESTYLES



Volusia County

MARYAM H. GHYABI,

President

Ghyabi & Associates

Ask Maryam Ghyabi which of her many engineering projects she is proudest of and she will immediately say, "The I-4 bridge over the St. Johns River." Serving some 80,000 vehicles daily, that bridge provides a critical connection for commuters and travelers from Volusia County to the metro-Orlando area.

Maryam describes the bridge, which represented two years of working nonstop while chairing the Interstate-4/St. Johns River Bridge Coalition, as "so close to my heart. The project brought business, economic development. It opened the gateway among Volusia, Seminole and Orange Counties."

She continues, "Every time I pass that bridge I feel that sparkle in my eyes and my heart."

Her voice and presence transmit a dynamic warmth, strength and authority. An Iranian native, Maryam arrived in the United States just as the 1979 Islamic Revolution was beginning to change her country.

Leadership was her long-held dream. As a young girl in Iran, she was told by her grandfather that she could be a woman engineer if she wanted to be. "My grandparents were awesome," she

recalls.

Maryam obtained a B.S. in civil engineering and a master's degree in transportation engineering. She has taught as an adjunct professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and worked as the Chief Transport Planner for Volusia County. Since the mid-1980s, Maryam has led many key efforts in transportation issues. She spearheaded the revision of the I-4 master plan, including future extension of light rail transit through Volusia County to I-95.

Florida Transportation magazine named her one of the state's ten most powerful women and she has been the subject of a PBS documentary. Recently she was nominated as one of the five most influential women in Volusia County.

When discussing the subject of being powerful, however, Maryam says, "I don't know it. It's important not to let that get



to your head."

What counts most are the four guiding principles that she lives by, and on which she runs Ghyabi & Associates, the engineering and planning firm she founded in 1995. Those are: having integrity by meeting commitments, displaying entrepreneurship by taking the initiative, being civic-minded by participating in community service and stewardship programs, and possessing uniqueness in being progressive, innovative, creative and bold in order to achieve the best possible performance/results.

Ghyabi & Associates employs a staff of fifty and has offices in Ormond Beach (where Maryam lives), as well as Lake Mary, Deland and Jacksonville. Currently the firm is studying its potential for expanding to the state's west and south sides. "Without my team here none of this would be possible," says Maryam. She calls them "a phenomenal group" who have been

with her a very long time and assist in her community work.

Being president or chairwoman of local and statewide organizations requires considerable time and attention to set various agendas, Maryam points out.

One major responsibility is The Women's Center at Daytona Beach Community College, which provides various forms of assistance to displaced women so they can graduate to become doctors, engineers or teachers. Maryam currently is chairing the Center's Advisory Board, where community leaders are raising funds to be matched one hundred percent by the state. Funds will support textbooks, clothing, employment or daycare and eventually housing.

Undoubtedly the most challenging aspect of Maryam's life is balancing her business and community work with her role as a single mother raising her 15-year-old daughter Paria. "Motherhood is extremely important to me," Maryam comments. As she told an interviewer: "My first priority is my daughter, but I'm also responsible for my business, employees and to the community." She aims to create balance by attending some of her daughter's functions, some company-related events and some civic ones.

Maryam serves on the boards of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Floridians for Better Transportation, FICS and SunTrust Bank. She also devotes time to various charity and leadership organizations, such as the Susan G. Komen Foundation — Race for the Cure and TEAM Florida Partnership.

She chaired the Women in Business Symposium with Volusia County Economic Development to help women business owners in Volusia County and Flagler County take their businesses to the next level. The first event, held in 2005, was so successful it has become an annual event expanding to statewide level.

Maryam defines her extensive volunteerism as "what the United States is all about. It's ultimately what satisfies you."