

Margaret A. Gillis

Margaret (Marty) Gillis is a testament to the contemporary adage, "There is no force more powerful than a woman determined to rise." Marty was the youngest of four children which explains her competitiveness, her drive to achieve and her "never back down" nature. Growing up, Marty attended public schools where she excelled as a scholar, an athlete, a member of student government and a pageant participant. She went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree and later a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Rutgers University. Marty's business career began when she was one of two African-Americans selected by the banking organization now known as JP Morgan Chase, to participate in their highly coveted International Management Training Program. Marty worked her way up the ranks to become one of the first African American female vice presidents in a large international banking organization.

Marty left her banking career 22 years ago when she became a McDonald's franchisee. She currently owns and operates eleven restaurants in New Jersey, where she is active in and recognized by the communities she serves. Some of the recognition Marty has received for her involvement, contributions and donations includes multiple NAACP Community Service Awards, National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women's Award, Neptune Education Foundation Award, U.S. Congressional Certificate of Special Recognition and induction into the Rutgers African-American Alumni Alliance Hall of Fame. Today, Marty remains a supporter of the local Little Leagues, Pop Warner, multiple Soccer Leagues and Girls' Basketball teams. She personally has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to high school and college students.

Within the McDonald's system, Marty is a trailblazer and a leader. She was the first woman to serve as Chair of the African American Consumer Market Committee which directs all national marketing activities targeting African Americans. Marty served 10 years as chair. She was pertinacious as she led the committee and successfully advocated for, re-energized and advanced McDonald's African American marketing programs. These included McDonald's sponsorships and activations at the Essence Music Festival, HBCU Football Classics, Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour, 365Black Awards, CIAA Tournament, Black Film Festival, United Negro College Fund, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, NAACP and others. These programs created many opportunities for multiple minority owned companies.

Anyone can follow a path, but only a leader can blaze one. Marty has distinguished herself as a leader. Her contributions at McDonald's and throughout her career have paved the way for others.

Marty has been married for more than 25 years to James D. Swanson Sr.