

# Debra L. Mars

Debra L. Mars is a graduate of the University of Southern California and the University of Wisconsin where she received a BS in Business and an MBA respectively. Ms. Mars has over 25 years experience in brand and promotional marketing in addition to Minority Business Development.

She is currently the Chief Creative Officer/Chairman of **GIFTED by dezyn (GBD)** an innovative and thematic promotional products and services agency who is also an Emerging Business partner with the NFL.

The agency services a vast assortment of clients ranging from Entertainment to Consumer Packaging and Automotive. The company has been consistently lauded for its innovation, creativity and professionalism. Prior to founding GBD, Ms. Mars was President/CEO of Mars Promotional Services; an Ad Specialty Company. Prior to becoming an entrepreneur, Debra held various positions in brand marketing, consumer promotions and minority business development with: General Mills, Coca-Cola and Frito-Lay Corporations. During her tenure at Frito-Lay, she headed the promotional launch of Chester Cheetah. Under her leadership, Frito-Lay's MBD program evolved into a comprehensive corporate commitment that included advocacy, supplier development and procurement. As a result, in 1989 the corporation purchased over \$68 million in goods and services from minority owned suppliers, compared to \$1 million dollars in 1983.



Throughout her entrepreneurial journey Ms. Mars' business savvy and civic leadership has been nationally recognized through such distinctions from: Frito-Lay, JCPenney, The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), The Kellogg Foundation, The Kellogg School of Business Executive Program, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Business Opportunity Symposium Series-Par Excellence Award, Dallas Morning News/Dallas Black Chamber/Miller Brewing Company: "Quest For Success" entrepreneurial award; to name just a few accolades. Ms. Mars has also been featured in numerous publications including Essence and Black Enterprise Magazines.

Grateful for her life experiences, Ms. Mars frequently volunteers her time to enlighten and mentor others on the rewards and challenges of being an entrepreneur. While at Frito-Lay, Debra authored and nationally facilitated the acclaimed "Business in the Mainstream" entrepreneurial educational series. She has served on numerous Boards including: National Sickle Cell Anemia, Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Dallas Convention and Visitor's Bureau, State Fair of Texas Advisory Board, Celebration of Life Foundation, Dallas Black Chamber Convention and Tourism Advisory Board, National Family Life and Education Foundation and The Collin County American Heart Association Fundraising Task Force. She is a member of: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Jack and Jill and The Links Inc. A native of Los Angeles, California, Ms. Mars resides in Dallas, Texas she is the mother of two children Winston and Zoe; her greatest treasures!

Her mantra is: **"Everyday is a gift to be shared and lived with purpose, joy and gratitude"**.