



TEDxMidAtlantic Takes Place in D.C.

Posted by [Katie Byrnes](#) / 28 Oct 2016

On October 21 and 22, 50 speakers took to the TEDxMidAtlantic stage to speak to the crowded auditorium in the Sidney Harman Hall in Washington, D.C.

Among the speakers was Jean Case, an investor, philanthropist, and pioneer in interactive technologies. She and her husband founded the Case Foundation in 1997 after nearly 20 years of work in the private sector.

Her TED Talk focused on entrepreneurs, and how the biggest major ideas have mostly favored one group. White men. She listed several major companies to illustrate this point. Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), Walt Disney (Disney), Elon Musk (SpaceX), Steve Jobs (Apple), Alexander Graham Bell (the telephone), and Thomas Edison (the lightbulb).

As she spoke to the crowded auditorium, she spoke about the importance of venture capital, which has helped many major companies that we know today get their start. She listed Starbucks, Tesla, and WholeFoods as examples of this.

To demonstrate the points she was making, Case pulled up some statistics on venture capital.

"In recent years, only 10% of venture capital has gone to companies with a female founder," Case explained. "And if you flip that, that means that 90% has gone to men."

And even more astounding was her next statement - that female owned firms grow at a rate of 1.5 times the national average. African American owned firms have received 1% of venture capital in recent years, and grow at a rate of 60%, according to Case.

She finished her talk by speaking about the bias that seems to inhibit entrepreneurs, by presenting 5 rules. According to Case, the 5 rules come from "a lot of" years in the industry, as well as many years of traveling the world with her husband and the Case Foundation looking at the startup culture.

At the end of her TED Talk, Case pulled up an image from a Google search of images of successful entrepreneurs. The first 30 results that were on the screen were all white males. When the audience was shocked and began laughing, Case said it surprised her when she was on stage.

"It's almost like, so bizarre to think that can be the case in this day and age," she said in an interview following her time on the stage. "I think that's what the laughter

reflected."

She continued, "But we must recognize it and we need to take steps to level the playing field. So that budding entrepreneurs everywhere, no matter your size, your shape, the color, wherever they come from or their background, can believe that they can get that jet fuel and they can build the next great American company."

As for the future, Case is very encouraged by the response she has been receiving once people are educated on the data that she presents.

"I think people are inspired to think about the potential for our startup economy, if we make room for more."