

# Beach woman wins small business recognition

BY DEBORAH MARKHAM  
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VIRGINIA BEACH - Dona A.P. Storey received a garbled fax with one decipherable word: "Congratulations."



**Dona A. P. Storey was named the Region III Minority Small Business Person of the Year.**

Intrigued by the sentiment and the resemblance of the smudged letterhead to the U.S. Small Business Administration's logo, Storey called a friend in the SBA's Richmond district. In a couple of days, the mystery was solved. Storey, president and owner of Quality Technical Services Inc. in Virginia Beach, had been named the Region III Minority Small Business Person of the Year. She and 10 other regional winners had been invited to the National Minority Enterprise Development Week ceremonies held in Washington, to vie for the national title. "She's not the candidate with the most spectacular sales," said Tammy Proffitt, a spokeswoman for SBA's Minority Enterprise Development office in Richmond. "There were companies with double and triple her annual revenue. It was her compelling story, her sheer will and determination to succeed." Storey established QTS as a management consulting business in the early 1980s. For years, a credit card with a \$5,000 limit was her only financing. She was certified in 1994 by the SBA's Section 8(a) Business Development Program, created to help socially and economically disadvantaged businesses compete for federal contracts. Shortly after receiving the designation, Storey landed her first Navy contract - \$63,000 for plans to renovate and refurbish a Naval Command building in Dahlgren, Va. Within

the same year, she also took on her company's largest federal contract to date, a \$20 million award to manage the construction of the IRS national headquarters. Today, QTS's customers include Time Inc., JP Morgan Chase, and Johnson & Johnson as well as the Navy, Army, IRS, SBA, and various state and local governments. The 8(a) designation helped her better compete for federal contracts, she said. But that was all it did for her. She had to learn the terminology, new ways of negotiating and different accounting systems. She credits the Richmond district SBA office with guiding her to information and people she needed. She credits her family for instilling a strong work ethic. Her father, a Filipino immigrant, worked as a Navy steward while building a coin-operated laundry business. She grew up working in a family business. And, she kept family in her business - her husband, sister and brother-in-law all work for QTS. She credits other business owners, outside of prime contractors, for helping her along the way. "Many people threw me the rope to help me, and I try to do the same thing," she said. Despite a busy schedule, she speaks at conferences and advises other women and minority business owners. Such charitable efforts made her stand out as a nominee on the district and regional level. She was one of six business owners nominated for the district, and one of six in the region. Eleven candidates competed on the national level. Betty P. Chao, of WESTECH International Inc. in Albuquerque, N.M., won the title. As far as Storey is concerned, it was enough to win Region III, which represents Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and Washington, and has a reputation for being aggressively competitive. "I know it's cliché," Storey said. "But for me, it was like winning the Academy Awards."

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