

Zen Woman

*A big shout-out to great sponsor **Georgetown University!** Earn an **Executive Certificate in Organizational Development** and increase your ability to build high performance organizations. See ad to the right for more info!*

By Karin Tanabe for Bisnow on Business

It's hard to believe, but once there were no **yoga studios** downtown. Then came **Christy Turlington** doing yoga on the cover of *Time* in 2002 and everyone was saying "Om." **Kimberly Wilson**, Creative Director of **Tranquil Space**, started teaching yoga in her U Street living room in 1999, during the **dark ages** of the Indian exercise discipline. Within a year she had outgrown her home, and nine years and three studios later, Tranquil Space has gone from **10 students a week to 700**.

One of the few non-corporate types to win the **Smart CEO Bravo Women Business Achievement Award** this year, Wilson came to Washington for a paralegal program, then worked in the trademark area. She left the legal world in 2000 to focus on her studio and pursue a masters in women's studies at **GW**, which had the **first such program in the nation**. "Our students are **85% women**, and that's pretty standard nationally," says Wilson who offers a men-only class on Wednesdays at her 17th street location. "The studio is quite feminine. The goddess is our logo. It's just that foremost, my work is about **empowering women**." Tranquil Space **launched a non-profit** two years ago that brings yoga, creativity and leadership to girls in high school. The all-volunteer program goes to schools, synagogues, **boys and girls clubs**, "anywhere there is a group of girls already gathered."

Tranquil Space just moved to a new **three studio, store and spa space** on 17th, adding to its **Arlington** and **Bethesda** locations. Wilson used sustainable materials like cork flooring and wood from an old farmhouse. She takes the same mentality to **her yoga clothing-line** started in 2002. "We use bamboo organic cotton and **plant a tree for every online order we ship**." A clothing line and three studios in nine years sounds like a fast rise but Wilson calls it "a **slow organic journey**."

