



ONE ON ONE

Keith Vaz MP with Juliette Foster



Juliette Foster was born in London and began her career in journalism during her twenties after graduating from the University of Wales. The media hadn't always been her first choice of vocation as she had previously toyed with the idea of working in the church or the legal profession. After starting out at BBC Radio London Juliette went on to work for some of Britain's leading media organisations including Bloomberg Financial Information Television, Channel 4, Sky News, and BBC World Service Television. She has hosted numerous high profile awards ceremonies including the T Mobile Business Awards & the Start Up Stars, which is co-sponsored by the banking giant HSBC and the Daily Express newspaper. In 2002 Juliette's achievements were formally recognised by the European Federation of Black Women Business Owners with a special award for her professionalism.

Q. I have heard that you once thought of pursuing a career in law, why did you change your mind?

A. You're absolutely right...once upon a time I really wanted to be a barrister! As for the change of mind...well...there wasn't really a specific reason although if I had to identify a trigger I would definitely say that an interest in history had something to do with it.

Q. In 2002 your work in broadcasting was recognised by the European

Federation of Black Women Business Owners, what does that mean to you?

A. It means a hell of a lot! I was genuinely surprised to be nominated and really touched at being given the award. For me it was and still is incredibly symbolic: it was a huge "Thank You" to my family for believing in me, to the friends who rallied around me whenever I felt like giving up.

Q. Where would you like to see your career go from here?

A. That's a really good question and not an easy one to answer as I have more than one ambition. I'm currently writing my first novel and would love to see it published and turned into a mini series for TV. I also enjoy sharing my knowledge of the media with other people. A couple of years ago I set up a company that trains people on how to handle the press.

Q. What has been the greatest obstacle to your career so far?

A. Gender & racial prejudice, and at some point, I will probably have to fight against a good measure of ageism! Call me old fashioned but I believe in a meritocracy and that's got nothing to do with age, race, or gender but has everything to do with ability.

Q. What do you feel is the most important political issue of this year?

A. Iraq! Without doubt the decision to commit British troops to an invasion force was highly controversial and the support that was there in the beginning, has now largely evaporated.

Q. Where do you find your inspiration?

A. From black and white films of the 1940s and fifties...I love the way the scripts were written, and how the women were strong willed and deli-

ciously intimidating.

Q. Which is your favourite South Asian restaurant?

A. Chutney's at the back of Euston station. I don't normally go a bundle on vegetarian food because sometimes it can taste bland to a devout carnivore like me but this restaurant really is the exception.

Q. What was the last book you read and why?

A. Middlemarch by George Elliot. It's a wonderful literary feat accomplished in that she brilliantly weaves together the threads of 19th century English village life, with its gossip, petty jealousies, frustrated ambition, and the strengthening power of love.

Q. What was the last film you saw, and what did you

think of it?

A. Pirates of the Caribbean 3. What can I say except that after three hours fixed to my seat I felt as if I'd been forced to watch wet paint drying on a rusty old radiator.

Q. If you were marooned on a desert Island what historical figure would you like to spend your time with?

A. It would have to be Martin Luther King. I first heard the "I Have A Dream Speech", when I was in my final year at university and the effect was mesmerising. Through the crackling of the tape recorder I heard a voice of courage, conviction and above all strength.