



For Immediate Release

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**WPEO HONORS OUTSTANDING WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS,
CORPORATIONS AND ADVOCATES**

--Annual Awards Recognize Efforts and Achievement Supporting Women Business Owners--

New York, NY (March 6, 2015) – The Women Presidents’ Educational Organization (WPEO) recognized outstanding achievements on behalf of women’s business enterprises (WBEs), corporations and women’s business advocates – located in New York, Northern New Jersey, Southern Connecticut and the Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia areas – at the WPEO’s Annual Awards Breakfast today at The Pierre Hotel in New York City.

As the northeast regional affiliates of the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the nation’s leading advocate of women-owned businesses and third-party certification organization, WPEO certifies and validates that companies have met official criteria as a business legitimately-owned, managed and controlled by women.

Criteria for the winners of the Outstanding Corporation awards include accomplishments in support of women business owners and the women’s business community, innovation, participation in the WPEO proprietary Done Deals™ challenge, and overall commitment to the mission of the WPEO. Advocate and Star awardees are selected based on significant involvement with WPEO and support of women-owned businesses. The President’s Award winners, which are selected by Marsha Firestone, Ph.D., WPEO President and Founder, and Sandra Eberhard, Executive Director, WPEO-DC, have gone above and beyond in their service to the WPEO.

The 2015 Award winners include:

New York Region

- **Merck - Outstanding Corporation**
- **Beth Canning, Prudential - Outstanding Women’s Business Advocate**
- **Margaret Marcucci, Coranet Corporation - Star Award**
- **Sue Darago, MetLife - President’s Award**

DC Region

- **Sodexo - Outstanding Corporation**
- **Joan M. Hairston, Washington Gas - Outstanding Women’s Business Advocate**
- **Michelle Bell, 1st Choice LLC - Star Award**
- **Alicia Thompson, Capital One - President’s Award**

“Our theme this year – ‘Relationships, Recognition and Rewards’ – says it all,” said Eliseo Rojas, Chief Procurement Officer, Interpublic Group and Chair, WPEO Board. “WPEO helps open up opportunities for WBEs to gain access to incremental business opportunities with corporate members and with each other that might have been previously inaccessible without certification. All of this results in enhanced recognition that translates into rewards for everyone concerned,” he said.

“It is my privilege to recognize these extraordinary WBEs, Corporate Members and Advocates in the New York and Washington, D.C. Regions, acknowledging their continued participation, support and commitment to WPEO,” said Marsha Firestone, Ph.D., President and Founder. “We celebrated our fifteenth anniversary last year in New York. This year the DC region reaches this landmark. I am proud of all that WPEO has achieved to increase access to business opportunities. Our programming initiatives, partnerships and advocacy empower WBEs to build relationships with Fortune 1000 companies and with each other,” she said.

Sponsors

- **Corporate lead sponsors:** Bank of America; ConEdison, Inc.; Sanofi; Microsoft
- **WPEO-DC 15th Anniversary sponsors:** Aetna; Exxon Mobil Corporation; and Dominion
- **WBE lead sponsors:** Adco Electrical Corporation; Artech Information Systems; Atrium Staffing; HighRoad Press; Progressive Promotions; the Studio

About The WPEO

The Women Presidents' Educational Organization (WPEO) is a regional affiliate of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the nation's premier third-party certification organization for Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs). The mission of the WPEO is to create increased access to business opportunities for WBEs. Its programs develop skills and knowledge for WBEs, advocate in the public and private sectors, foster relationships between WBEs, corporations and the government, and provide full service, third-party certification to women entrepreneurs in areas that include New York, Northern New Jersey, Southern Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. WPEO is incorporated in the state of New York and is recognized as a 501(c) (3) organization. For more information please visit www.wpeo.us or call (212) 688-4114.

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