



WOMEN PRESIDENTS'
Educational Organization

For Immediate Release

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WPEO ANNUAL AWARDS SALUTE ACCOMPLISHED WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS, INNOVATIVE CORPORATIONS AND ADVOCATES

(New York, NY – March 3, 2017) -- The Women Presidents' Educational Organization (WPEO) looked to the future and the potential impact that disruptive business technologies will have on women's business enterprises (WBEs) at its Annual Awards breakfast today. Several honors recognizing outstanding achievements were announced on behalf of WBEs, corporations and women's business advocates. These accolades reflect singular achievement and accomplishment by a dynamic community of certified women-owned businesses and companies that support them, located in the Northeast region -- including New York, Northern New Jersey, Southern Connecticut and the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia areas.

An increasing number of Fortune 1000 companies require that vendors be officially certified as women-owned entrepreneurs, in order to participate in their supplier diversity programs. WPEO confers the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) third-party certification, the nation's premier accreditation for companies that are at least 51% owned, operated and controlled by women. WPEO helps its Corporate Members tap into a pool of high caliber vendors and connects WBEs in a variety of industries with each other.

Winners of the Outstanding Corporation Awards meet stringent criteria. This includes significant accomplishments in support of WPEO women business enterprises and the women's business community, as well as innovation, participation in the proprietary Done Deals™ challenge and overall commitment to the WPEO mission. Advocate awardees are selected based on significant involvement with WPEO and support of women-owned businesses. The President's Award winners, 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 2017 award winners include:

New York Region

- **Outstanding Corporation – New York Life Insurance Company**

DC Region

- **Outstanding Corporation – Capital One**
- **Outstanding Business Advocate – Ann**

- **Outstanding Women’s Business Advocate – Jay Sheldon Wesley, Head of Global Supplier & Diversity, Pitney Bowes**
- **President’s Award – Kate Kleyman, Supplier Diversity Manager, Guggenheim Partners**
- **Ramakumaran, Ampcus**
- **President’s Award – Darlene Fuller, Senior Director Supplier Diversity, Sodexo**

“The theme of the awards program this year is looking to the future,” said Eliseo Rojas, Chief Procurement Officer, Interpublic Group and Chair, WPEO Board. “Every industry will be affected by disruptive business practices, such as artificial intelligence. Automation and robotics are having a significant impact to help reduce expenses, work smarter and drive efficiency. These disruptive business practices are revolutionizing the speed with which women business enterprises drive innovation and interact with their customers,” he said.

“Staying competitive in a rapidly changing business ecosystem requires state-of-the-art technologies, sophisticated data and analytics” said WPEO President & Founder Dr. Marsha Firestone. “Women business enterprises in every vertical industry are addressing the impact of the new normal in competing for contracts,” she said.

Sponsors for the 2017 WPEO Annual Awards Breakfast include:

- Platinum Level: Dominion
- Diamond Level: Ampcus; AARP; Avis Budget Group; Capital One; Interpublic Group; Microsoft Corporation; Wells Fargo
- Corporate Lead: AIG; Bank of America; Consolidated Edison Company of New York; Microsoft Corporation
- WBE Lead: Adco Electrical Corporation; 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. Follow us on [Twitter](#) @WPEONYDC. Like us on [Facebook](#) @TheWpeo.