

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WPEO ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN NUMBER OF CONTRACTS WITH WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS**

(New York, NY – March 8, 2019) -- What better time than International Women's Day, during Women's History Month, to salute the success of distinguished Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs) and the corporations who view doing business with them as critical to their own success. The Women Presidents' Educational Organization (WPEO) announced significant accolades today at the Annual Awards breakfast, reflecting singular achievement and accomplishment by a dynamic community of certified women-owned businesses and companies with which they do business. This year's theme focuses on Top Ten Secrets of Success (**#wpeotips4success**).

A significant number of Fortune 1000 companies require that their 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 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.

The WPEO awardees are all located in two Northeast regions – WPEO-NY (New York State, Northern and Central New Jersey -- through Trenton -- and counties on the Southern Connecticut shoreline – including Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex and New London) and WPEO-DC (Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia).

Winners of the Outstanding Corporation Awards meet stringent criteria. This includes significant accomplishments in support of WPEO women's 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 2019 award winners include:

#### **NEW YORK**

- **Outstanding Corporation – MetLife**
- **Advocate – Joy Wong, Corporate Vice President, New York Life**
- **Star – Ranjini Poddar, Co-founder, Artech**
- **President’s Award – Loren Breslow, President, Command Marketing & Innovations**

#### **DC**

- **Outstanding Corporation – Accenture**
- **Advocate – Liz Whitehead, CEO, 12PointFive, LLC**
- **Star – Staci Redmon, President & CEO, Strategy Management Services, Inc.**
- **President’s Award – Anjali (Ann) Ramakumaran, CEO, Ampcus**

“Every year we wrestle with a fundamental question. Given the changing landscape of business, what can we do differently to increase the likelihood of business success? We’ve taken a hard look at specific steps women entrepreneurs can take to address the challenges and opportunities we face, spur growth and increase competitiveness in 2019,” said Eliseo T. Rojas, WPEO Board Chair.

WPEO President & Founder Dr. Marsha Firestone said, “As much as we want business to be a level playing field, women entrepreneurs face significant challenges. At one time or another most have found themselves in a male-dominated industry or workplace that does not want to acknowledge their leadership role. Dealing with limited access to funding raising capital is even more difficult for women-owned firms. We strive to address these barriers to entrepreneurial success. Having a robust support network is essential.”

Sponsors for the 2019 Awards Breakfast include:

- Platinum Level: Ampcus; Capital One
- Diamond Level: AARP; Avis Budget Group; Dominion Energy; Microsoft
- Corporate Lead Sponsors: AIG; Bank of America; Con Edison; Microsoft
- WBE Lead Sponsors: Adco Electrical Corporation; Blank2Branded; HighRoad Press; Progressive Promotions; Raare Solutions; 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](http://www.wpeo.us) or call (212) 688-4114. Follow us on [Twitter](#) @WPEONYDC. Like us on [Facebook](#) @TheWPEO.

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