

WJA Honors Industry Leaders at 2015 Awards for Excellence Gala *Scholarship and grant winners also recognized for their achievements*

August 3, 2015, New York, NY -- The 2015 Women's Jewelry Association Awards for Excellence Gala, which was held on July 27 in New York City, hosted over 700 attendees, and inducted three industry leaders into its WJA Hall of Fame. WJA also announced the 2015 winners of its Awards for Excellence in 10 categories.

The event also raised \$60,000 for the WJA Foundation's Scholarship and Grant program. To highlight the importance of the dinner for the latter purpose, the group also invited scholarship winners and winners of the WJA-Carelle Grant in honor of Brooke Tivol McGrath, to attend the event. Several grant and scholarship winners addressed the crowd, extolling the value of the awards in furthering their studies and careers.

WJA bestowed its Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award to Pam Mortensen, SVP & general merchandise manager, jewelry, watches and fashion accessories at JCPenney. The Ben Kaiser Lifetime Achievement Award, awarded to a deserving man, was given to C. Clayton Bromberg, president, Underwood Jewelers, Jacksonville, Florida. The Corporate Award was given to Gumuchian, and accepted by owner Anita Gumuchian and her two daughters and partners, Myriam and Patricia Gumuchian.

WJA's Awards for Excellence were bestowed upon the following: Monica Stephenson of iDazzle for Editorial Media; Pamela Froman of Pamela Froman Fine Jewelry for Design; Deborah Nicodemus of Moda Operandi for Non-Traditional Retail; Veronica Guarino of Louis Anthony Jewelers for Retail - Fewer Than 15 Doors; Laurie Watt of Mayer & Watt for Manufacturer/Dealer/Supplier; Eve Rogers of Graff for Retail - Greater Than 15 Doors; Rebecca Moskal of Communique for Marketing & Communications; Amy Levine of Gurhan for Sales and Merchandising; Becka Johnson Kibby of the Edge Retail Academy for Special Services; and Jeanine Drtina of Cartier for Watches.

In speaking about the importance of her 2013 WJA-Carelle Grant, winner Lisa Kim spoke about the effect on the growth of her business, Lisa Kim Fine Jewelry in Los Angeles. She used her grant to build a new website and hire an experienced photographer to help her create a brand identity. Kim also spoke about how the grant gave her the press and networking opportunities she needed to advance her business.

Jenifer Bellefleur, winner of WJA's first Female Veteran Scholarship, sponsored by Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company, spoke about her background and experience, first as an explosive ordinance disposal technician in the United States Army, then her eventual journey to becoming a designer and bench jeweler. Bellefleur will use her scholarship to attend the Gemological Institute of America's Graduate Jeweler program, to further improve her skills.

An auction and raffle were held during the dinner to raise funds for next year's WJA scholarships and grants, and guests were also given the opportunity to donate funds via envelopes on each of the gala's tables. "Through your generous support, the WJA community is able to make a difference for women in every stage of their careers," WJA Executive Director Bernadette Mack told attendees. "The funds we distribute annually will help a member in Texas buy a new piece of jewelry making equipment, help a woman launch a new jewelry line in Chicago, aid a student at the University of Georgia, and help a

military veteran pay for courses. These are just a few of the remarkable ways you are supporting this vibrant and future thinking community."

WJA HALL OF FAME HONOREES

Lifetime Achievement Award

Pam Mortensen
SVP & General Merchandise Manager, Jewelry, Watches and Fashion Accessories
JCPenney

Ben Kaiser Award

C. Clayton Bromberg
President, Underwood Jewelers, Jacksonville, Florida

Corporate Award

Gumuchian - Anita, Myriam, and Patricia Gumuchian

NOMINEES - WINNERS STARRED

Category I - Design

Emily Armenta - Emily Armenta
Pamela Froman - Pamela Froman Fine Jewelry*
Suzanne Kalandjian - Suzanne Kalan
Monica Rich Kosann - Monica Rich Kosann

Category II - Manufacturer/Dealer/Supplier

Karishma Javeri - SDC Designs, LLC
Sylvie Levine - Sylvie Collection
Zina Sherman - Zina Sterling
Laurie Watt - Mayer & Watt*

Category IIIa - Retail - 15 doors or more

Lisa Bridge - Ben Bridge Jewelers
Eve Rogers - Graff*

Category IIIb - Retail - Fewer than 15 doors

Ellen Hertz - Max's
Veronica Guarino - Louis Anthony Jewelers*

Tara Silberberg - The Clay Pot
Melissa Quick - Steve Quick Jeweler

Category IIIc - Non-Traditional Retail

Alexis Clarbour - Portero
Amy Jain/Daniella Yacobovsky - BaubleBar
Beth Gerstein - Brilliant Earth
Deborah Nicodemus - Moda Operandi*
Ruth Thuston - Circa

Category IV - Sales & Merchandising

Amy Levine - Gurhan*
Tina Bruno - Stephen Webster
Jennifer Shanker - MUSE Showroom

Category V - Marketing & Communications

Kirsten Darrow - Fred Meyer
Donna Jolly - American Gem Society
Rebecca Moskal - Communique*
Colby Shergalis - Forevermark

Category VI - Editorial Media

Sarah Lisitski-Gerrish - Redbook Magazine
Eileen McClelland - Instore Magazine
Danielle Miele - Gem Gossip
Monica Stephenson - iDazzle*

Category VII - Special Services

Donna Borrelli - JCK
Cindy Chandler - Smart Jewelry Show
Becka Johnson Kibby - The Edge Retail Academy*
Heather Smith Nunez - Cartier

Category VIII - Watches

Audrey Bogdonoff - Gucci
Agnes Campanile - Swatch Group/ Omega
Jeanine Drtina - Cartier*
Michelle Peranteau - Baume & Mercier