



WJA Announces 2018 Awards for Excellence Visionaries

For its 35th anniversary, the association revamps and simplifies awards for the 2018 gala

The Women's Jewelry Association (WJA) has announced its new 2018 Visionary Award honorees, for the association's annual Awards for Excellence gala, to be held Monday, July 16, 2018. The gala will once again take place at Pier 60 on the Chelsea Piers in New York City, and will mark WJA's 35th anniversary in the jewelry industry.

"The WJA Board voted to introduce its Visionary Awards, as a way to mark our anniversary and to recognize individuals and organizations making a difference in the cause of women's equality," says Jenny Luker, WJA board president. "Our four awards will go to women who are the first to hold their high positions of leadership in their companies, and to organizations that are providing support and mentorship to women."

The three individual WJA Visionary Awards will be bestowed on: **Mercedes Abramo**, president and CEO of Cartier North America; **Caryl Capeci**, president of Hearts On Fire; and **Nadja Swarovski**, the first female member of the executive board of Swarovski.

The fourth award will be given jointly to **De Beers Group** and **UN Women**, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 2017, De Beers Group announced a three-year partnership with UN Women to accelerate the advancement of women across its organization, in its diamond producing countries, and in its marketing. Accepting the award on behalf of their organizations will be Elizabeth Nyamayaro, head of UN Women's "HeForShe" movement, as well as David Prager, executive vice president of corporate affairs for De Beers Group.

Mercedes Abramo began her career at Cartier as director of the flagship Fifth Avenue mansion, after several years in luxury hospitality. She then served as assistant vice president of New York retail – overseeing all New York Cartier boutiques – and then as vice president of retail for all of North America. She was appointed president and CEO of Cartier North America in 2014. She serves on the board of directors of Jewelers of America and the advisory board of the Luxury Education Foundation, a public not-for-profit organization that focuses on educational programs for students in design and business. She is also a key advocate for the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards, an international business plan competition for women entrepreneurs, created in 2006 to identify, support, and encourage projects that solve contemporary global challenges.

Caryl Capeci began her career at N.W. Ayer and J. Walter Thompson, where she worked to create demand for diamond jewelry in the U.S. for De Beers Group. After joining Hearts On Fire as vice president, marketing, then chief marketing officer, she was named president of the company in 2015. Capeci is responsible for all company operations around the world and oversees the integration of HOF into the 2,200-door retail network of Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group, which acquired Hearts On Fire in 2014. She serves on the boards of Jewelers for Children and the Diamond Empowerment Fund. She is also a member of the Twenty-Four Karat Club of the City of New York.

Nadja Swarovski is the first female member of the executive board of Swarovski. She is the great-great-granddaughter of Daniel Swarovski, who founded the company in Austria in 1895. She leads the company's global branding and communications, celebrating crystal through creative



collaborations across fashion and jewelry, architecture and design, and stage and screen, as well as driving conscious luxury through the Atelier Swarovski brand, which created a charity bracelet with UN Women in 2016. Swarovski also oversees the company's sustainability agenda and chairs the Swarovski Foundation, both of which have a strong focus on promoting women's empowerment. She is an ambassador for Women for Women International, and, under her leadership, Swarovski has signed up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles and the UN Global Compact.

De Beers Group, established in 1888, is a member of the Anglo American group. Together with its joint venture partners, it employs more than 20,000 people across the diamond pipeline and is the world's largest diamond producer by value, with mining operations in Botswana, Canada, Namibia and South Africa. In regard to gender equality, it has committed to achieving parity in the appointment of women and men into senior leadership roles at De Beers by 2020, is investing in women micro-entrepreneurs and STEM students in its diamond producing countries, and is working to ensure "De Beers' brands are a positive force for supporting gender equality through all its marketing campaigns," according to the diamond company. It has already initiated a review of talent attraction and development processes, the roll-out of unconscious bias training, the establishment of a senior management-led reciprocal mentoring program, and a review of policies and recruitment guidelines.

UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. Its "HeForShe" solidarity movement provides a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of gender equality. Commenting on De Beers' three-year partnership, UN Women Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said: "We are delighted to have De Beers Group on board as a UN Women partner. With global organizations like De Beers joining [us], we are able to reach new and greater audiences to further build global awareness and support for advancing women's empowerment."

At its annual Awards for Excellence gala, WJA brings together industry leaders for a social evening that also raises money for scholarships and grants for deserving women entering or working in our industry. A silent auction will again be mounted to raise additional funds for these important causes. Sponsorships for the gala are currently available, and tickets to the awards gala will go on sale later this year. Please contact WJA Executive Director Bernadette McGovern Mack at: bernadette@womensjewelryassociation.com.

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About the Women's Jewelry Association

WJA's mission is to help women in the jewelry and watch industries advance and develop professionally through networking, education, leadership development, and the provision of member services. For more information, visit www.womensjewelryassociation.com

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