

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Minnesota's top women entrepreneurs honored
for innovation, achievement and economic success**

*Minnesota Chapter of National Association of Women Business
Owners (NAWBO) releases list of Women Achieve! finalists*

Minnesota women who are business founders, owners or partners are being recognized for their achievements on October 26 at the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO-MN) Women Achieve! Awards Ceremony and Luncheon. These awards honor the women's contributions to the local and national economy as well as their support of women-owned businesses.

"Women-owned business are growing at 1.5 times the national average, with start-ups doubling in the last three years," says NAWBO-MN President Mary Quist-Newins.

Adds Buffie Blesi, NAWBO-MN executive director, "These awards honor those women who are Minnesota's true innovators, movers and shakers."

The Women Achieve! Awards presented at the event will include:

- **Women Business Owner of the Year:** Presented to a woman whose business achieved sustained growth in size and revenue, and who showed innovativeness in response to challenges. **Presented to:** Jennifer Smith, Innovative Office Solutions (Burnsville)
- **Vision Award:** Awarded to a NAWBO woman business owner or a corporate partner who demonstrated exemplary vision in providing opportunities for women business owners, supporting and advocating for them and helping guide them on a path toward success. **Presented to:** Regina Barr, Red Ladder, Inc. (Inver Grove Heights).
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Bestowed on a woman who has achieved long-term success substantiated by at least 20 years as a business owner. **Presented to:** Lori and Tracy Tapani, Wyoming Machine (Stacy).
- **Emerging Woman Business Owner of the Year:** Presented to a woman who has created or is growing a business that features a creative and innovative product or service. **Presented to:** Dara Beevas, Wise Inc. Creative Publishing (Minneapolis); Mercedes Austin, Mercury Mosaics (Minneapolis).
- **Woman Pioneer:** Awarded to a woman business owner whose company is succeeding in a typically male-dominated industry. **Presented to:** Bonnie Vogel, Vogel Mechanical (Roseville).

Additional awards will also be presented, including honors for innovation, in:

- **Established Woman Award:** Lili Hall, Knock, Inc. (Minneapolis); Laurel Anderson, Garnet Real Estate Services (Stillwater)
- **Innovation in Technology:** Kim Albee, Genoo (Golden Valley); Wendi Breuer, Seachange Print Innovations (Minneapolis)
- **Innovation in Healthcare:** Lisa Rudquist and Rachel Knutson, Ladibugs, Inc (Hopkins); Jen Swendseid, Heart & Core (Minnetonka)

- **Innovation in Finance:** Nancy Hovanes, Oak Creek Partners, LLC (Minneapolis); Beth Leonard and Stacie Usem, Lurie, LLP (Minneapolis)
- **Innovation in Services:** Polly Meyer, Image on Camera Consulting (Minneapolis); Anna Tsantir, Two Bettys Green Cleaning Services (Minneapolis)
- **Innovation in Retail:** Glenda Starkweather, Condor Fireplace/Boulder Creek Office (Spring Lake Park); Ashley Olds, Sweet Science Ice Cream (St. Paul)
- **Veteran Business Owner of the Year:** Major Noelle Racette, Your Corporate Allies, LLC (St. Louis Park)
- **Generational Award:** Linda Hagberg and Laure Rockman, Midwest Northern Nut (Minneapolis)

Awards Ceremony and Luncheon

The Women Achieve! Awards Ceremony and Luncheon will be held October 26 at the Midpointe Event Center from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The keynote speaker will be Jeanne Voigt, 2014 Inductee to the Minnesota Women Hall of Fame. Voigt founded MindWare in 1989 and grew the educational toy company into a \$18 million company before selling a majority interest in 2003. She currently serves on the boards of several private companies. She's also active in several non-profit endeavors including the Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan State University's Center for Women Entrepreneurs and the Jeanne M. Voigt Foundation. Most recently, Voigt helped women in Africa gain entrepreneurial skills.

Tickets for the event are available at <https://nawbomn.regfox.com/achieve-awards-2016> or by calling 612-326-7772.

Media Note: For additional information or to schedule an interview, contact Media Relations, Inc. at 952-697-5220.

About NAWBO

The National Association of Women Business Owners is the country's premier women's business organization working to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, social, and political spheres of power worldwide. Founded in 1977, the Minnesota Chapter of NAWBO was the first chapter within the organization. Representing the issues and concerns of women-owned businesses at the national, state, and local levels, NAWBO is in the forefront of advocating on behalf of women business owners and their companies.

Calendar mention

Who: National Association of Women Business Owners, Minnesota Chapter

What: Annual Women Achieve! Awards Ceremony and Luncheon

When: October 26, 2016

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Midpointe Event Center

415 North Pascal Street, St. Paul MN 55104

Convenient parking is available

Registration: \$89 members, \$100 non-members

