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Women's Business Enterprise Hall of Fame Inducts 10 Honorees

Dallas, Texas – The Women's Business Enterprise Hall of Fame, now in its fifth year of celebrating women-owned businesses and their successes, inducted a new group of women entrepreneurs and those who value their contributions at the Four Seasons Resort Dallas at Las Colinas on Dec. 5. During the ceremony presented by the American Institute of Diversity & Commerce, honorees from around the country were recognized for excellence in entrepreneurship, leadership and mentorship.

Women-owned business enterprise inductees for 2013 are Arcilia Acosta, president/CEO of CARCON Industries and STL Engineers in Dallas; Sharon Hoffman Avent, president and CEO of Smead Manufacturing Co. in Hastings, Minn.; Sharon Evans, president & CEO of CFj Manufacturing in Fort Worth, Texas; and Betty Manetta, president and CEO of Edison, New Jersey-based Argent Associates LLC.

Inductees in the category of corporate advocacy are Debbie Dennis, senior vice president, human resources and corporate affairs, Oncor Electric Delivery Co. LLC in Dallas; Theresa Harrison, director of supplier diversity, Ernst & Young LLP; Joan Namahana Kerr, director of supplier diversity and sustainability at San Francisco-based Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

Geri Swift, founder and president of Philadelphia-based Women's Business Development Center, is the Advocate inductee, and Al Williams, chief procurement officer for New York City-based Accenture PLC, is the Executive Leadership inductee.

The Organization inductee for 2013 is Women Impacting Public Policy Inc. in San Francisco.

2013 WBEs

- Arcilia Acosta is president/CEO of CARCON Industries CARCON Industries, a full-service construction firm based in Dallas, with offices in Houston and San Antonio. She is also founder and CEO of Southwestern Testing Laboratories Engineers, which provides geotechnical engineering, construction materials testing and environmental consulting. Both firms have been involved in major Dallas-Fort Worth construction programs, including the 27-mile light rail projects for Dallas Area Rapid Transit. CARCON is currently the construction manager of terminal renovations at DFW International Airport.
- Sharon Hoffman Avent is president and CEO of Smead Manufacturing Co., a leader in office filing products and records management solutions. Based in Hastings, Minn., and woman-owned since 1955, Smead is recognized as one of the largest privately held and one of the largest women-owned companies in the state. Avent has received significant attention for her business acumen and dedication to community. She received the

Corporate Visionary Award from Office Depot and has been named the Business Owner of the Year by the National Association of Women Business Owners.

- Sharon Evans is president & CEO of CFj Manufacturing, an international promotional company that specializes in a broad range of employee recognition services. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, CFj Manufacturing has offices around the globe and serves many Fortune 500 corporations. In addition to employee recognition, CFj provides branded merchandise programs, base manufacturing, online catalogs and gift card programs. Evans serves as a member of the global marketing team for the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council. She also sits on the board of directors for the Women’s Business Council – Southwest.
- Betty Manetta is the president and CEO of Argent Associates Inc., a managed services company with a unique ecosystem that combines supply-chain intelligence with technical support to provide a new business experience and value to its customers and their customers. With offices in Edison, New Jersey and Plano, Texas, Argent Associates also focuses on supply-chain innovation, helping customers expand their supply-chain capabilities through intelligent M2M applications. Manetta takes part in the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women, mentoring women business leaders of Afghanistan and Rwanda.

2013 Corporate Advocate

- Debbie Dennis is senior vice president, human resources and corporate affairs, for Oncor Electric Delivery Co. LLC in Dallas. She has responsibility for all human resource planning, policy, performance management, rewards strategies, sourcing, talent management and employee and labor relations. Dennis is also responsible for the strategic direction of Oncor’s community involvement and volunteer initiatives and their alignment with the company’s philanthropic and business goals. This responsibility includes serving as the executive sponsor of Oncor’s employee volunteer programs and directing Oncor’s signature volunteer program, Oncor Texas Trails.
- Theresa Harrison is the director of supplier diversity for Ernst & Young LLP, a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. She is responsible for the management and oversight of the firm’s supplier diversity initiative, which includes the design, development and implementation of diverse supplier policies and processes. Under her leadership in supply-chain diversity, Ernst & Young has received several accolades for the firm’s support of entrepreneurs. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council named Ernst & Young as one of America’s Top Corporations for WBEs.
- Joan Namahana Kerr is director of supplier diversity and sustainability at Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Under her leadership in this area, PG&E has more than doubled its annual

spend with diverse business enterprises, raising it to more than \$2 billion. In 2012, the company's spend with women reached \$659 million, an increase of 28 percent. PG&E has improved results in all areas of diverse spend, while focusing on finding qualified diverse businesses enterprises in areas that offer the greatest opportunity. PG&E's 2012 supplier diversity accomplishments demonstrated the company's commitment to WBEs and community economic development.

2013 Advocate

- Geri Swift is the founder and president of the Philadelphia-based Women's Business Development Center, an organization that fosters the development and retention of successful businesses by delivering resources that enable individuals to start new businesses and grow existing ones. To date, WBDC has served more than 26,000 individuals — changing the lives of women and their communities. In 2000, under Swift's leadership, the WBDC expanded its mission to facilitate the relationship between corporations, government and WBEs by creating the Women's Business Enterprise Council serving Pennsylvania, Delaware and southern New Jersey.

2013 Executive Leadership

- As chief procurement officer at Accenture PLC, Al Williams is responsible for the overall procurement strategy focusing on maximizing the value of all goods and services purchased by the company, which specializes in management consulting, technology services and outsourcing. He is also responsible for overall performance across the source-to-pay process, including sourcing and category management and procurement-to-pay processes, ensuring alignment with the company's business strategy. Williams drives key procurement-led initiatives to promote the value of supplier diversity and foster opportunities for women-owned businesses and other diverse suppliers throughout the company.

2013 Corporate Leadership

- Women Impacting Public Policy Inc. is the nation's leading nonpartisan public policy organization that advocates on behalf of 4.7 million businesswomen, including 75 business organizations, in the legislative processes of our nation, creating economic opportunities and building bridges and alliances to other small business organizations. Established in 2001, WIPP takes the issues that directly affect women business owners to the U.S. Congress, the White House and federal and state agencies in order to advocate for legislation that beneficially impacts business development. WIPP's initiatives offer an extensive array of educational resources to help WBEs excel at every level.

“Had tonight's leaders chosen to take a backseat in the drive to even the playing field for WBEs, the rest of us might not be here,” said Jarilyn Fox, WBE Hall of Fame emcee, as well as

president and publisher of Women's Enterprise magazine. They don't just look around and say, 'Somebody really needs to do something.' Our mentors cultivate leads, rally the troops, ease access to funding and develop plans to weather storms. They lead the cheers and offer reality checks along the way. And, our entrepreneurs grabbed their dreams, combined them with a lot of hard work, spirit, vision — and maybe a bit of luck —to transform them into success."

Tom Trotter, chairman of the American Institute of Diversity and Commerce, praised the inductees for "their extraordinary impact on WBEs."

"The WBE Hall of Fame is proud to recognize national leaders in women's business development," he continued. "They have generated a quantifiable contribution through time, talent and effort, along with the help of a team of dedicated people and companies. We honor their successes and thank them for demonstrating a long-term commitment and performing a unique service."

Platinum sponsors for the event were Energy Future Holdings Corp. and PepsiCo Inc. Gold sponsors were AT&T Inc., Cadillac and Pinnacle. Silver sponsors included American Airlines Inc., Bill and Patti Alcorn, Ernst & Young LLP, Fluor Corp., Group Ō Inc., Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., Erle Nye and Ricochet Fuel Distributors Inc. Bronze sponsors were Alcatel-Lucent, Avis Budget Group, CARCON Industries, ONCOR Electric Delivery Co. LLC, The Procter &Gamble Co., Jim and Billie Schultz, Telecom Electric Supply Co. and Texas Instruments Inc. Patron sponsors were ICON Information Consultants, Joy Promotions Inc., Small Pond Video Productions, Verizon Communications Inc. and Versa Printing Inc.

About the WBE Hall of Fame

The WBE Hall of Fame is a national nonprofit organization launched in 2009 to recognize the contributions of women entrepreneurs in their communities, as well as their accomplishments within their industries. Through a network of women's business development organizations, corporate and government advocates and women-owned enterprises, the WBEHF spotlights best practices and insights, as women create businesses that help build a stronger economy. For more information, visit www.wbehf.org or call 972-943-4606.

About the American Institute of Diversity & Commerce

Dallas-based American Institute of Diversity &Commerce is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization that focuses on education, research, best practices, validation and recognition of performance in diversity and inclusion. AIDC was established to recognize and honor those organizations—nonprofit and for-profit—that demonstrate outstanding performance in these areas. For more information or to donate, visit www.aidcusa.org.

