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*Photos from previous ATHENA Awards presentations are available*

**BACC Honors Outstanding Local Women Leaders  
At ATHENA Awards Luncheon May 26 at Biltmore Country Club**

(Barrington, IL – 4/11/2016) – The Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce (BACC) will honor five outstanding local women leaders at the 2016 ATHENA Awards Luncheon on Thursday, May 26 at the Biltmore Country Club in North Barrington. The event is hosted by BACC’s Women’s Biz Net (WBN), a network of women business and community leaders.

“The ATHENA Award was created in 1982 to illuminate inspiring women leaders that excel in their profession, give back to their communities, and most importantly, are a role model to other women, setting the example for achieving your full leadership potential, “ said BACC President/CEO Suzanne Corr. “These nominees have the distinction of impacting our community in profound and meaningful ways.”

The 2016 BACC/WBN ATHENA Nominees are Nandia Black, Village President of Kildeer; Deborah Leydig, Owner of Norton’s U.S.A; Susan McConnell, accomplished photographer and founder of Let It Be Us; Georgeanna Mehr, President of Hoffman Estates Community Bank; and Deborah Rivera, General Manager and Co-Owner of Ambroisa Euro American Patisserie.

Nandia Black, Village President of Kildeer, started her legal career as a prosecutor for Cook County, then later joined the civil litigation team at the Chicago firm of Vedder Price Kaufman & Kammholz and today has her own firm. She has served as a Trustee for the Village of Kildeer and was recently elected their Village President. During her service she has helped the Village dramatically improve their financial position, create an electric aggregation program for lower energy costs for residents, and led a successful sales tax referendum to improve local roads. She is a member of the Association of Women Attorneys of Lake County whose mission is to promote personal development and professional advancement of women attorneys.

Deborah Leydig started her career in fashion design working for Geoffrey Beene, Ellen Tracey and Jones of New York. During the 80s she switched her focus to graphic design and sold gift wrapping paper to department stores under her designer label. In 1987 she began a professional acting career and after appearing in a play about the decline in American products; she opened Norton’s U.S.A in 2007 in Barrington to help the American worker and manufacturer. Her plight to save the American worker has led to a highly successful storefront and online business all dedicated to made in America products. In her community, Deborah has dedicated efforts to supporting many local organizations, raising thousands for causes such as cancer, local food pantries and more. She is considered a local business advocate and mentor to other business owners.

Susan McConnell is an accomplished photographer and marketing professional from Barrington who uses her craft to improve her community and support important causes. She served as the documentarian of the

Barrington White House community restoration project. An adoptive mother, McConnell founded Let It Be Us, the first nonprofit of its kind dedicated to promoting adoption through foster care and to improving the dire circumstances for children who age in the adoption system. McConnell is the recipient of the Women of the Year award from Congresswoman Melissa Bean, has received the "Jack Curran Award from the Wellness Place, a cancer resource center and the "Hearts of Hope Award," from JourneyCare.

Georgeanna Mehr is President of the Hoffman Estates Community Bank, a branch of Barrington Bank & Trust Co., N.A. Mehr started her career as a personal banker and mortgage officer and excelled through the banking field, facilitating bank mergers and conversions with smaller banks and ultimately landing the position of President of the first branch of the Barrington Bank & Trust Company, built in Hoffman Estates in 2001. After building the branch from scratch, she grew the bank to over \$100 Million in deposits in two years and led the opening of a second Hoffman Estates branch in 2012. In the community, Mehr has been heavily involved in Fellowship Housing, mentoring Moms and their families, Barrington United Way, and in the business communities of both Barrington and Hoffman Estates.

Deborah Rivera is general manager and co-owner of Ambrosia Euro American Patisserie in Barrington along with her husband Richard. The award-winning bakery sets an industry standard for its handcrafted croissants, brioche, muffins, cookies and more. They have been recognized for their artesian craft and culinary art, supplying extraordinary baked goods for life's occasions as well as for the enjoyment of local customers. Rivera has thrived by creating an atmosphere where team work, growth and mentoring for success are the focus. She has trained hundreds of young people. Known for greeting her customers on a first-name basis, Rivera is invested and involved in the lives of her customers and a regular donor to important community causes.

ATHENA, an international award, has been given in 500 cities and 8 countries. Recipients have included Condoleezza Rice, former Secretary of State; Kay Koplovitz, founder of USA Networks and the first women network president in television history; Pat Schroeder, former 12-term U.S. Congresswoman; Ruth Bader Ginsburg, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, and others.

The Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce's Women's Biz Net (WBN) is a network of women empowering women. WBN offers monthly meetings and programs that bring relevant topics, networking opportunities and a forum for building relationships that can enhance your business aspirations and enrich your life. The monthly meetings are dedicated "To gather professional women to inspire, enrich, empower and benefit from the unique talents of extraordinary women!"

WBN's first ATHENA Leadership Award was presented to Joyce Palmquist, Executive Director of the Barrington Area Council on Aging (BACOA) in November 2012. The 2014 award was presented to Ellaine Sambo-Reyther, VP – Director, Trust & Estate Services at BMO Harris Bank. The 2015 ATHENA recipient was Dr. Amy Derick of Derick Dermatology.

Photo: Last year's 2015 BACC/WBN ATHENA recipients were (from left) Christina Currie of Christina Currie Events, Recipient Dr. Amy Derick of Derick Dermatology, and Barbara Alvarez of the Barrington Area Library.

*About the Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce (BACC):* The BACC ([www.BarringtonChamber.com](http://www.BarringtonChamber.com)), founded in 1969, is an association of 800+ member businesses representing more than 1,800 employees dedicated to the success and prosperity of the 11 regional communities it serves: Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Inverness, Kildeer, Lake Barrington, Long Grove, North Barrington, Port Barrington, South Barrington and Tower Lakes. BACC promotes economic opportunities, advocates the interests of business, offers programs for professional development and leadership, and works to foster a robust regional economy.