



# Signature Awards

WOMEN LEAVING THEIR MARK ON THE WORLD



**NAWBONYC**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS  
*New York City Chapter*

&

**OPEN** SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK<sup>SM</sup>  
FROM AMERICAN EXPRESS

PRESENT

THE THIRD ANNUAL  
SIGNATURE AWARDS

2012



# Signature Awards

In 1992, the NAWBO-NYC Board of Directors initiated an annual awards ceremony to highlight the achievements of successful New York women business owners. Originally, only one award was given each year. However, with the steady rise in the numbers and types of successful women-owned businesses, it became more difficult to select just one winner when so many were deserving of recognition.

In 2001, a *Lifetime Achievement Award* was created to honor women who exemplify the commitment, determination and endurance it takes to create a successful, long-term business. Our first recipient of this prestigious award was Muriel Siebert, President of the Women's Financial Network by Siebert and the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

Last year's Lifetime Achievement Award winner was fashion entrepreneur Diane von Furstenberg, whose signature wrap dress came to symbolize female power and freedom to an entire generation of women.

We also changed the name to the NAWBO-NYC Signature Award to recognize the individuality of each award winner. Just as a signature is a personal mark that can never be precisely duplicated, so each Signature Award winner is a woman who has left her own unique mark—her "signature"—on her company, on its success and on the New York business community. Each winner's actual "signature" is etched onto their award to further recognize their individuality and their achievement.

In 2002, we decided to increase the number of awards and further defined the areas of competition based on the number of years in business:

- **Fast Track Signature Award: 5 years or less in business**
- **Benchmark Signature Award: 5-10 years in business**
- **Master Signature Award: 10+ years in business**

Also in 2002, a *Community Leadership Signature Award* was created to pay tribute to women in nonprofit and community-based organizations, and recognizes that a not-for-profit organization involves as much budgeting, management control and financial decision-making as a for-profit business. Our first recipient was Julia Erickson, Executive Director of City Harvest, Inc., the world's first and largest food rescue organization.

This year marks the debut of The *OPEN Network<sup>SM</sup> Signature Award* from our corporate partner and event sponsor, American Express. We are especially grateful for all the support they have given us over the years and for their generous sponsorship of the Signature Award Gala.

### The Nomination and Award Process

Women business owners in New York can nominate themselves for a Signature Award or be nominated by someone else. To be eligible, nominees must be in business for at least one year. The jury is comprised of NAWBO-NYC Board Members, corporate partners and prominent New York City entrepreneurs.

Award selection is based as much on qualitative criteria—including compassion, intelligence, leadership and courage—as conventional measures of business success, such as profitability and growth. The combination of these factors have enabled these remarkable women to achieve success in their own unique "signature" fashion.

See page 25 for a list of past honorees.