

NINE WINNERS RECEIVE GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE'S 2009 'BRIDGING THE GAP' MINORITY BUSINESS AWARDS

BALTIMORE - Five Baltimore-area companies, a majority-minority partnership, and two individuals were named last night as winners of the Greater Baltimore Committee's 2009 Bridging the Gap Awards.

The awards were presented during September 23 ceremonies honoring minority-owned and women-owned firms for achievement and others for their efforts to strengthen minority business development. The awards event was held at the new Southern Management Corporation Campus Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Winners for outstanding business achievement range from a minority-owned technology services provider to a woman-owned firm with a unique stroke rehabilitation product. Winners also include a majority-owned construction firm that offers free business training for minority firms, a major hospital system that mentors its minority vendors, a state senator, and the director of a Baltimore City resource center that helps minority and women-owned businesses.

"Recognizing successful minority-owned and women-owned companies and other advocates underscores the economic value of fully engaging all of our region's business resources," said GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry. "Through their commitment and success, all of these winners are building a stronger business climate in the Baltimore region and state."

The awards program is part of Bridging the Gap, a minority business development initiative of the Greater Baltimore Committee, the region's most prominent organization of business and civic leaders.

Categories and winners of the 2009 Bridging the Gap Awards are:

Achievement by a minority or woman-owned business:

-- **District Healthcare; Pernel Williams, CEO.** This fast-growing minority-owned supply firm based in Prince George's County is expanding its operations to Baltimore. It recently opened a warehouse in East Baltimore and will be hiring employees from the city at its Milton Avenue location.

-- **Encore Path, Inc; Kris Appel, CEO.** This Baltimore-based woman-owned firm is successfully marketing a ground-breaking arm rehabilitation device for stroke patients that was developed in the labs at the University of Maryland.

-- **Mjach Designs; Melissa Jachelski, CEO.** This woman-owned design firm in Baltimore specializes in corporate identity, advertising, trade show and promotional marketing and believes in promoting environmentally sound business practices.

-- **Technology Specialists, Inc.; Lee E. White, CEO.** This Annapolis-based technology services company has received Top Performance Awards from the Boeing Corporation - the only African American-owned firm to receive this recognition from the

nation's largest federal government prime contractor.

Majority-owned commitment to inclusive business practices:

-- **Turner Construction Co., Geoffrey Marshall, vice president & general manager.** This Baltimore firm provides contractors with the tools to pursue work in the private and public sectors. The company heads up a free 8-week training program for small, minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Business partnerships or strategic alliances:

-- University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), Donna Jacobs, senior vice president, government and regulatory affairs; Carl Tietjen, senior director, corporate contracts and procurement services; TRA Medical Supply, Inc., Timothy R. Alston, president. Through its vendor diversity program, UMMS has mentored TRA, a minority-owned firm in Upper Marlboro, to overcome barriers faced by many minority firms, including access to capital and markets, and establishing productive business relationships.

President's Award

-- **Catherine E. Pugh, Senate of Maryland.** Since her election to the state Senate in 2006, Pugh has worked aggressively to grow and strengthen minority-owned and women-owned businesses. This year, she authored and gained passage of six pieces of legislation that significantly improved the state's MBE program.

-- **Paul Taylor, executive director, Small Business Resource Center.** Taylor directs the work of Baltimore City's non-profit resource center for small-business that is part of the Baltimore Development Corporation. A vigorous advocate for minority and women entrepreneurs, Taylor partnered with the Baltimore City's public works and transportation departments to create the Local Contractor Development Program to help minority and women-owned businesses take advantage of multi-million dollar contract opportunities.

Award winners were among 25 finalists selected nominations submitted by businesses, civic organizations, employees, customers, elected officials and government agencies.

Other finalists in the business achievement category were: aMuse Toys, Barb Clapp Advertising and Marketing; and Berkshire Associates, Inc.

Finalists for majority-owned business commitment also included: Parsons Brinckerhoff, LifeBridge Health, and M&T Bank.

Partnership finalists also included: UMMS, Whiting-Turner, and Mahogany, Inc.; UMMS and Mimar Architects; Humanim, Inc. and The Watchmen; and District Healthcare and Owens & Minor.

Other finalists for the President's Award were: Nathaniel Alston, Jr., CEO, the Horizons Group; and Carl Tietjen of UMMS.

More information about the Bridging the Gap initiative is available on the GBC website, www.gbc.org.