

Chamber honors Women Who Make a Difference

Staff reports

The Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce will host its Women Who Make a Difference Awards luncheon Monday at the Marriott BWI Hotel. The event will honor 16 women who have made significant contributions to their communities and served as mentors for future leaders.

The chamber says it will recognize “the powerful contributions women make every day in business, philanthropic endeavors and public service.”

This year’s honorees are:

Vicki Callahan

Executive Director of Opportunity Builders Inc.

Since becoming executive director in 1991, Callahan has overseen the growth and development of OBI. Through her direction and strong leadership, OBI moved into a 41,000-square-foot home on 14.5 acres of land. Callahan has been an active leader and board member for the Maryland Association of Community Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities for more than 15 years. She helps coordinate the annual Disability Day at the legislature which brings together self-advocates and supporters of the Developmental Disability Community.



Callahan

Lynne Chaput

Certified public accountant with PC Financial Services

Chaput doesn’t have clients in her accounting practice. She has friends that she does accounting for. She is equally as passionate about helping dogs as she is about helping humans. In addition to her accounting practice, she and her husband own and operate Canine Fitness Center. When one of their dogs needed swim therapy to mend a knee issue, they discovered that there was no facility close to them. They decided to build their own facility and make it affordable for all dog owners.



Chaput

Carressa Christian

Interim program director of Chrysalis House

Christian is also program director for Intensive Outpatient Program and Supportive Housing. She directs the 26-week Intensive Outpatient Program at Crownsville. She also directs the newly opened Intensive Outpatient Program in Baltimore. Christian has served as volunteer manager, executive support and addictions counselor. Chrysalis House saved her life and given her the opportunity to serve as a role model for other women going through similar circumstances.



Christian

Joan Gaither

Quilter, retired teacher

Gaither researches, designs and creates quilts that tell important stories. She has created 182 documentary story quilts since

2000. She holds quilting workshops designed to encourage participants to capture personal oral histories and memories from aging storytellers in the community. She created the Dr. Joan M.E. Gaither Scholarship/Young People’s Studio to offer a range of programs for young artists to develop their skills.



Gaither

Capt. Katie Goodwin

Anne Arundel County Police Department

Goodwin is the commander of the Western District assigned to the Bureau of Patrol. She received the Department Commendation Award for the successful apprehension of a serial rapist. This case was an eleven-month investigation involving numerous victims across the region; she initiated and led an informal task force, which included the coordination of several agencies. This resulted in the arrest and conviction of this serial rapist. She also launched the Sexual Assault Response Team which is designed to implement a comprehensive, sensitive and coordinated system of intervention and care for sexual assault victims. It has become a model for other jurisdictions.



Goodwin

Dr. Faith Harland-White

Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development at Anne Arundel Community College

Harland-White oversees hundreds of faculty and staff in numerous departments. Her innovations include the creation of the Institute Model which combines credit and noncredit programming in related areas to better serve the needs of students and the community. She has been a tireless advocate for students at the local, state and national levels. She has served as a member of the Local Workforce Development Board and as president of the Maryland Community College Association for Continuing Education and Training.



Harland-White

Linda Harris

Legislative assistant to Anne Arundel Councilman Pete Smith

For over 20 years, Harris has served the residents of Anne Arundel County to help them navigate local government agencies and offices. She has maintained an extremely positive reputation and is known as the person who gets things done. She routinely engages local stakeholders and state leaders to raise awareness of an issue or to find the solution to a constituent’s concern.



Harris

Barbara Huston

CEO of Partners In Care

She oversees Partners In Care’s programs which provide more than 27,000

no-monetary-cost tasks each year to enable older adults to remain in their homes and enjoy their lives with dignity. Partners In Care promotes active engagement of older adults and their families by offering services in exchange for their donated time and talents.



Huston

Lacie Keesee

Sales manager at TownePlace Suites by Marriott at BWI Airport

Keesee warmly welcomes all guests of the TownePlace Suites Marriott at BWI Airport. She has established connections all over Maryland and nationally as she develops new business to support the hotel — which benefits the community and the many people who are employed by the hotel. She counsels up and coming members of the team on how they can improve their lives and further their careers. She is active in groups that support women, including For Women Only, Liberty Outreach Center and Lotus.



Keesee

Jessica Kellner

Catering sales manager at The Hotel at Arundel Preserves

Kellner steps outside her normal job description to boost morale and provide additional support to other hotel employees, such as organizing the employee holiday party. She was nominated by the Hotel for the MHLA Stephan Porter Emerging Leader Award because the hotel believes in Kellner’s passion for her career and her leadership skills. She is always learning new ideas to make everyone’s jobs easier while increasing customer satisfaction.



Kellner

Keshia LeBlanc

Client operations lead at Flagger Force

LeBlanc supervises a team of individuals who are tasked with coordinating the ordering for all Maryland and Washington, D.C., clients and their dispatching coordination. She serves as the point of contact for large companies such as Verizon and Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. A single mother with two children, LeBlanc is a mentor and friend to other women at Flagger Force. She frequently counsels and coaches young women who work out in the operation. Because of her guidance, more than 50 women have moved into roles of greater responsibility at Flagger Force.



LeBlanc

Toni Prince

Director of finance at The Brick Cos.

Prince manages the day-to-day operations of the commercial real estate portfolio as well as oversees the operational cash flow and financial reporting functions. She



Prince

has provided leadership for several of The Brick Cos. charitable efforts by organizing volunteers for The Brick Companies Foundation Golf Classics, coordinating the meal preparation for Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore and leading the fundraising effort for the South River Tree of Lights event.

Debi Smigovsky Grim

Aegis Title Associates

Posthumous award
Smigovsky Grim spent her entire career in the real estate title business. She died on Dec. 8 from brain cancer. In 2004, she partnered with attorney Alan Engel to form Aegis Title Associates. She was a role model for building networks and relationships. She put people together — matching people with needs with those who had the products and services that could help them.



Smigovsky Grim

Julie Smith

Owner of Siddalee Photography

Smith specializes in family and commercial photography, corporate, real estate and charity events. She recently converted an old bakery into a photography studio and kept the bakery history by retrofitting many of the bakery items into lighting, shelving and decorations. Smith has brought new life into the Linthicum-Shipley Shopping Center with her willingness to help other business owners collaboratively market the Linthicum Height’s business community.



Smith

Kimberly Maher Wharton

Owner of Maher’s Florist

Wharton is the second-generation owner of this family business started by her mother 40 years ago. She regularly donates her time and energies by organizing school supply drives and delivering backpacks of school supplies to each of Pasadena’s 14 schools. She keeps in contact with guidance counselors to evaluate the needs of the faculty and student body at those schools. Wharton participates in mock job interviews at Chesapeake and Northeast high schools.



Wharton

Dr. Judy Yu

Owner of Dental FX

Yu received her Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry degree from Temple University and was recently honored in their Gallery of Success. She recently completed her Master of Business Administration at Loyola University. She is an advocate of education, always striving to educate herself and her staff in an ever-changing field. She has served on the Maryland State Committee for Oral Cancer Awareness. Yu co-founded Junior Fellowship of Christian Athletes.



Yu

Put Ribera del Duero on your team



MICHAEL AUSTIN
The Pour Man

In sports, winning an MVP award is the highest individual honor, and right behind it is the lesser-known and off-overlooked MIP award. The Most Valuable Player stands out above all others for obvious reasons, but the Most Improved Player — she’s the one to watch. She’s the one who has come the furthest in the shortest amount of time.

If you’re the MVP, dripping with natural talent and drive, where do you go from there? Another MVP? Multiple MVPs? It’s a nice trajectory if you can swing it. It’s also a lot of pressure. But the MIP? Nowhere to go but up. And everyone is pulling for you.

We all pulled for our buddy “Bag,” who won his college football team’s MIP award as a lowly freshman and went on to set school records by the time he was a senior. Drastic improvement followed by overwhelming value. If Spanish wine regions were individual players instead of, well, Spanish wine regions, the MIP award would have gone to Ribera del Duero



MICHAEL TERCHA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Finca Resalso from Spain’s Ribera del Duero embodies the region’s style with its dark fruits aromas and bright sweetness.

years ago.

Through the 1970s, the region was little-known outside of its home country. It produced mostly unremarkable wines, with only two exceptional wineries: the legendary, well-established Vega-Sicilia and the upstart Pesquera. The appellation was officially established in 1982 — the theoretical MIP award would have come into play shortly thereafter.

Capital and talent flowed in, and today Ribera del Duero is known for its tempranillo-based red wines, which range from fruity and instantly acces-

sible, to more brooding and powerful. It’s home to scores more wineries than ever, and many are respected by wine experts.

Situated on a high plain in the Castillo y Leon region, ranging from about 2,500 to 2,800 feet in elevation, Ribera del Duero sits in north-central Spain, about 100 miles north of Madrid. The region’s name translates to “bank of the Duero,” referring to the famous river that runs through it before becoming the Douro in Portugal and flowing out into the sea. Drastic temperature shifts have a great effect on the wines, with

hot, sunny days and cool nights allowing tempranillo to fully ripen while retaining acidity.

Note, though, that the grape variety is also locally called tinta del pais and tinto fino, and according to local regulations, red wines must be composed of at least 75 percent of it. Blending grapes include cabernet sauvignon, merlot, malbec and garnacha, though many Ribera del Duero reds are 100 percent varietals, with potent levels of alcohol in the neighborhood of 14 percent.

They love their oak barrels in Ribera del Duero, and

the famous red wines fall into three main categories: crianza, reserva or gran reserva. Crianzas spend at least 12 months in oak barrels and are released two years after harvest. Reservas see at least 12 months of oak aging and are released three years after harvest; and gran reservas spend a minimum of 24 months in oak and are released five years after harvest. (The region also produces rosados and a tinto joven, or “young red” style, which can see no time in barrels, or up to 12 months. It hits store shelves only a few months after harvest, but most tinto joven

doesn’t travel far from where it was made.)

Some of the more famous gran reservas of Ribera del Duero are eye-poppingly expensive. But bottles at the reserva level might save you a few shekels over comparable offerings from the main competition, Rioja, which many would argue deserves the Spanish wine region MVP award year after year. These are clearly different wine styles, despite both being tempranillo-based and a relatively short distance apart. Rioja wines are generally more elegant and gentle compared with the concentrated and powerful wines of Ribera del Duero. It’s not exactly apples to apples but still let’s all keep tabs on Ribera del Duero to see if it is able to replace its “I” with a “V.” It’s the kind of player you always want on your team — the one that keeps getting better.

Folks in and around Ribera del Duero are partial to pairing the wine with the classic local dish lechazo, a young, roasted lamb. If you don’t happen to have one of those handy, the wines also pair well with grilled meats, game and casseroles. Hearty fare. This is not wimpy wine. Expect some combination of ripe dark fruits, leather, tobacco, anise, herbs, cocoa, toast, vanilla, spice and minerality with full body, grippy tannins and zingy acidity.