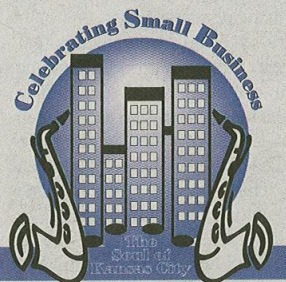


Celebrating Small Business . . . The Soul of Kansas City



The Fourth Annual 25 Under 25 Awards show borrowed its theme “Celebrating Small Business: The Soul of Kansas City,” from our city’s rich jazz heritage. More than 500 guests celebrated with the honorees at the Saturday evening gala at the Doubletree Hotel in Overland Park, Kan., on Feb. 26.

The annual awards, presented by Kansas City Small Business Monthly, honor 25 Kansas City area for-profit businesses with under 25 employees. Eligible businesses must have been operating for at least three years and have demonstrated consistent growth, fostered a culture of giving back to the community and shown an ability to overcome obstacles.



All That Jazz

The evening kicked into full swing with a packed networking reception featuring the popular Wall of Fame that showcased the 25 honored companies.

The Dave Stephens Band set the mood for the gala with several swing and jazz numbers before dinner. Former KCTV 5 news anchor Valissa Smith kept the jazz theme alive as she introduced each honored company, and the Dave Stephens Band ushered each honoree to the stage

with their upbeat strains. Proffer Productions created a succession of video montages that featured the honorees and incorporated well-known area jazz venues.

Host Kelly Scanlon, publisher of Kansas City Small Business Monthly, and Brian Butler, director of Supplier Diversity at Sprint, presented the awards to the owners of the honored businesses.

The fourth-year class of award recipients (see photo above) included Adams-Gabbert & Associates, Inc.;

Allstate Specialty Construction Group; Bartunek Technology Group; Best of Kansas City; BuiltToLastHome.com; Caption Services of Kansas LLC; COMMORLD of Kansas City; Design Supply Inc.; ESC Index; Greenleaf Construction Co., Inc.; HOT-METAL Creative LLC; Jantsch Slaggie Architects; L.R. Cloverleaf Inc.; Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise; Nature’s Window; NCES Inc.; Pegasus Capital Management Inc.; Prairiebrooke Arts; ProPrint Inc.; Reynolds Consulting; SturgesWord;

TakeTwo; Union Packaging; Versent—The Purple Guys; and Wrenn Insurance.

Mayor/CEO Carol Marinovich of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, was honored with the 2005 Entrepreneurial Legacy Award. *Kansas City Small Business Monthly* established the award in 2002 to honor a businessperson whose enduring contributions to the business community have created an environment of success for Kansas City entrepreneurs.

Throughout the evening, between



Top left: Phil Stowe, owner of 2005 winning company Design Supply, networks during the reception. Top right: Brooke and Mike Morehead, owners of winning company Prairiebrooke Arts, and their family. Bottom row (l to r): Melissa Sturges and Linda Word, owners of 2005 honoree SturgesWord; Barbara Cunningham (center) visits during the reception; Doug Perry, owner of BuiltToLastHome.com, a 2005 winner, visits with fellow honoree Montica Alexander, owner of The Best of Kansas City; Byron McIntosh (holding award), owner of winning company Greenleaf Construction, poses at the Wall of Fame after the gala.



groups of award presentations, several well-known area entrepreneurs offered videotaped words of inspiration to the honorees and their guests. These special luminaries included Steve and Joan Carter, Right Management; Chuck Rappe and Larry Bedell, Nitro Fitness; Ed Honesty, Best Harvest Bakery; and Ray Pitman, former owner of Pitman Manufacturing and a serial entrepreneur.

Gaining Momentum

The 25 Under 25 awards program continues to grow in popularity and to gain support within the business community.

“Our ongoing mission is to get the word out that small businesses are the driving force in the economy. More than 87 percent of businesses nationwide have no more than 19 employees. That’s a huge segment—individually they may not seem significant, but collectively they account for most of the business that’s done in this country,” said Scanlon.

She noted that the cooperation of key players in the business community who sponsor the event, serve on the advisory board, and act as judges is essential to the success of the program. She also said she appreciated the support of honorees from previous classes who have stepped forward into these roles.

“These community and business leaders understand the importance of small business in our economy and recognize the 25 Under 25 Awards as a vehicle for helping these businesses get the recognition they deserve,” she said.

Sprint, the co-title sponsor of the event since its inception in 2001, returned in that role. Several other businesses and organizations also sponsored the 2005 program. The Entrepreneurial Organizations at 4747 Troost sponsored the video, and reception sponsors included UMB Bank and Roger the Plumber, 25 Under 25 Class of 2002. Valley State Bank was an Entrepreneurial Supporter sponsor. Hot Talk 1510 KCTE was the radio sponsor, and S&M NuTec, 25 Under 25 Class of 2003, was the announcement sponsor. Howell Construction, 25 Under 25 Class of 2003, and Six Degrees Solutions, 25 Under 25 Class of 2004, were Entrepreneurial Leader sponsors. Commerce Bank again hosted the 25 Under 25 luncheon on February 8.

Other sponsors underwrote specific portions of the show or made in-kind contributions, including CAM, Inc.; Skyline Displays Heartland and Business by Promotion. A number of other businesses participated as table sponsors.

An independent panel of business leaders select the honorees. The 2005 panel of judges consisted of J. Grant Burcham, Missouri Bank and Trust Co.; Alan B. Corbet, GO Connection; Mary Lou Jacoby, Warehouse1; Denise Farris, Farris Law Firm LLC; Randall C. Ferguson, formerly with the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, and Melody Warren, Transportation Logistics Systems, Inc. and a 2003 25 Under 25 winner.

Other local business leaders who contributed to the event by serving on the advisory board were Michele Janson, Helzberg Entrepreneurial Mentoring Program; Mary Schanzer, Party Personnel; Tom Doty, Warehouse1; Sheryl Liddle, Ruskin Manufacturing; Pat Brown-Dixon, GSA; Duey Williams, Skyline Displays Heartland; Carol Howell, Howell Construction and a 2003 25 Under 25 Award winner; and Sherry Turner, Kansas Women’s Business Center.

Nominations for the 2006 25 Under 25 Awards will open on August 1, 2005. Visit www.25under25.com for details.



Above top left: Teri Rogers of award-winning company TakeTwo mingles at the reception. Above top right: Michael Hayes, Gene Hayes and Michelle Radcliffe pose with Gene Agee, Internal Audit at Sprint, after receiving their award for ProPrint. Above bottom left: Steve Metzler, Metzler Bro. Insurance Co., checks in. Above bottom right: Tanya Trost, owner of Metropolitan Nursing, visits with Mike Wrenn, owner of award-winner Wrenn Insurance.



Above top left: Caption Services of Kansas co-owners Kayla Patterson and Anne Schulman pose with Gene Agee, Internal Audit at Sprint, after receiving their award. Above top right: Carol Howell, owner of Howell Construction and a 2003 winner and 2005 advisory board member, visits with 2005 honoree Montica Alexander, The Best of Kansas City. Above bottom left: Jeri Bartunek, owner of 2005 award winner Bartunek Technology Group visits with Becky Wilson, WDS Marketing & Public Relations. Above bottom right: Melody Warren, owner of Transportation Logistics and 2003 award winner and 2005 judge, visits with Lirel Holt, co-owner of 2005



Left to right: Valissa Smith, owner of It'sAllAboutHer.com and former TV 5 anchor, was master of ceremonies for the evening; Jamie Smith-Hennessy, owner of Nature's Window, a 2005 honoree, poses with Gene Agee, Internal Audit at Sprint. Michael Jantsch and representatives of Jantsch-Slaggie Architects pose for a photo opp with Gene Agee, Internal Audit at Sprint, after receiving their award. Dave Stephens (singing) and The Dave Stephens Band provided upbeat jazz and swing entertainment before and after dinner and during the awards ceremony.