



## US Business Leadership Network Announces 2009 Exceptional Leadership Winners

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WASHINGTON, DC (September 22, 2009) – The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) today announced the winners of its **2009 Exceptional Leadership Awards**, which were presented to the recipients last week during the USBLN® 2009 Annual Conference. The awards recognized leaders in three categories - including Partner of the Year, Affiliate of the Year and Employer of the Year. Additionally, **Katherine McCary** of SunTrust Banks was awarded a **Lifetime Achievement Award** for her years of service on the USBLN® board of directors.

- **PARTNER OF THE YEAR**

**Wilson Resources, Inc. (WRI)** was nominated by the First Coast Business Leadership Network and the Miami-Dade Business Leadership Network for the Partner of the Year award. WRI partners with the Big Bend (Tallahassee and surrounding areas) BLN; First Coast (Jacksonville and surrounding areas); Gainesville BLN; Greater Orlando BLN (GOBLN); Polk County (Lakeland) BLN; Tampa Bay Metro BLN; and Miami-Dade BLN. WRI is widely-recognized as a driving force behind the statewide success of Florida's BLNs.

- **AFFILIATE OF THE YEAR**

Synergy, Inc. from Riverton, Wyoming nominated the **Wyoming BLN** for Affiliate of the Year award. The WYBLN is distinguished in having grown slowly and steadily in its expansion into 8 communities throughout the state with each community BLN operating under the guidance of a local BLN steering committee, which sets the agenda and ensures BLN activities are relevant to local needs.

- **EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR**

**Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** was nominated by the Michigan BLN for Employer of the Year award. BCBSM has served as a model for other businesses by sponsoring youth internships and hiring people with disabilities, as well as developing proactive policies for the retention and advancement of employees with disabilities. BCBSM is willing to share best practices and to learn from others - including hosting a Diversity Fair with a prominent position on the agenda for disability discussions, and meetings with Recruitment Teams to post jobs, host events, provide internships and most importantly hire people with disabilities.

The 2009 Exceptional Leadership Awards capped off yet another successful USBLN® Annual Conference, whereby attendance increased by 11 percent from last year.

The USBLN® is the only national business organization currently representing 60 BLN affiliates and satellites in 36 states - including the District of Columbia - and more than 5000 employers using a "business to business" strategy to promote the business imperative of including people with disabilities. For additional information about the USBLN® and its 2009 Exceptional Leadership Awards, please contact Brandon M. Macsata by email at [info@usbln.org](mailto:info@usbln.org).

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