



## History of the Signature Awards

### Signature Award Categories

#### **Fast Track (under 5 years in business)**

This woman has had a breakthrough success by being innovative and ahead of the curve in establishing herself and her company brand.

#### **Benchmark (5-10 years in business)**

This woman has made it past the critical five-year benchmark and is well on her way to the next level of business success.

#### **Master (over 10 years in business)**

This woman owns a mature company and continues to succeed by being constantly innovative—shifting her strategic focus, incorporating new technology, expanding her market or increasing her staff.

#### **Community Leadership**

This woman runs her nonprofit or community organization like an entrepreneur, making an impact both in the community and in the way she overcomes the business challenges faced by not-for-profit organizations.

#### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

This woman exemplifies the commitment, determination and endurance it takes to create a successful, long-term business and has succeeded in making her company a household name.

#### **The OPEN Network<sup>SM</sup> Signature Award**

Inaugurated in 2003, this special award is given to a woman whose company fosters the exchange of information and services specifically to help small women-owned businesses succeed.

### History of the Signature Awards

In 1992, NAWBO-NYC established an annual awards ceremony to highlight the achievements of successful New York women business owners. Since then, the Signature Awards have been expanded to include more award categories, reflecting the steady rise in the number of successful women-owned businesses.

In 2001, the name was changed to the NAWBO-NYC Signature Awards to recognize the individuality of each honoree, and their actual "signature" is etched onto their award.

In 2003, The OPEN Network<sup>SM</sup> Signature Award from our diamond corporate partner, American Express, made its debut. We are very grateful for all the support that American Express has given us over the years.

#### **The Nomination and Award Process**

Women business owners in the New York area 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 current and past NAWBO-NYC Board Members, corporate partners and prominent New York City entrepreneurs.

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

**See page 29 for a list of past honorees.**



**Finalist**



**Joannie C. Danielides**  
President,  
Danielides  
Communications,  
Inc.

Joannie Danielides founded Danielides Communications, Inc. in 1986, following a career as a public relations executive. She is known for handling high-pressure situations with savvy, reflecting her personal sophistication and ability to empower others by promoting their own professional experiences.

Joannie has always worked to promote dynamic women in a variety of industries, from entertainment to the corporate world, and has used her talent for image-making to design public image campaigns for women of distinction. Working for the city of New York, she served as Donna Hanover's press secretary for over seven years, and has worked with other talented women including Susan Lucci, Deborah Roberts and Columbia University healthcare expert Mary O. Munding.

Her firm's clients are diverse and include the Boys Choir of Harlem, Girls Choir of Harlem, Columbia University School of Nursing, Marymount Manhattan College, Citibank, The Hyatt Corporation, Fidelity Investments, Lands'End.com and ABC TV, among others.

Joannie recently served as President of New York Women in Communications and is currently President of its Foundation Board.



**Winner**

**Leslie Frank**  
Partner,  
**Anne Maxfield**  
President,  
Project Solvers, Inc.

**A**nne Maxfield met her partner Leslie Frank when both worked for Darcy Sue Fashions—Anne as a design director and Leslie as a VP of merchandising. Leslie, recognizing the need for proprietary brands at retail, helped develop the Jaclyn Smith clothing line and introduce it to K-Mart. Anne's highly developed design sense made the brand a success with over \$200 million in sales.

Anne and Leslie often brought in outside teams of designers for specific projects and thought this could be a great (and untapped) business opportunity. In 1988, they formed Project Solvers, Inc.—a central resource for top freelancers and permanent personnel in the fashion industry. They started in a corner of a showroom in a garment center. Today, they have a dozen employees and a much larger space in Chelsea.

Together, Anne and Leslie have made Project Solvers the premiere "creative outsourcing solution" for leading designers, manufacturers and retailers in the apparel and accessories industries with a database of over 2,500 candidates. They understand the market's employment needs and use their industry expertise to match free agents and full-time staff with the appropriate clients.

Anne is an active member of the Women Presidents' Organization, National Association of Personnel Services, American Apparel and Footwear Association and the Retail Marketing Society, and sits on the Advisory Boards of Marist College and Katharine Gibbs Fashion School.

Leslie is an active member of the American Apparel and Footwear Association and sits on the Vendor Advisory Board of QVC. Both are members of NAWBO-NYC.





*Honoree*

**Sharon Gersten Luckman**

*Executive Director,*

*Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc.*

**Sharon Gersten Luckman**

**S**haron Gersten Luckman is the Executive Director of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc. Now in her ninth season as Executive Director, Sharon has achieved an impressive record of fundraising, program development, marketing, cost containment and overall excellence in the field of arts management. Seen by an estimated 19 million fans in 48 states and 68 countries, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is regarded as an ambassador of American culture and a trailblazing leader in concert dance.

Sharon's tenure with Ailey began in 1992, when she was appointed Director of Development, responsible for planning and implementing all fundraising efforts for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, The Ailey School and Ailey Arts-in-Education. During her first season, the company raised 50% more funding than any previous year. Her commitment and dedication to the Ailey family and her leadership in establishing new programs and initiatives have resulted in record growth for the company.

Sharon was instrumental in establishing a partnership with Fordham University to create the Ailey/Fordham Bachelor of Fine Arts program in 1998. This groundbreaking dance degree program offers serious dance students the opportunity to study full-time at both The Ailey School and Fordham University, offering a world class artistic and academic education.

In 2002, President Bush awarded the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation a National Medal of Arts, the most prestigious award for artists and arts organizations in the country.

Sharon began her career as a dance teacher and went on to direct the 92nd Street YM/WHA Dance Center from 1978–1986. She later became Development Director and Executive Director of Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation and was Executive Director of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts for three years. Sharon currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Dance/USA.

In 2002, Sharon received the Arts Management Award for Career Service, and she received the Arts & Business Council's Encore Award for Arts Management Excellence in 2004.

*Sharon Luckman*



## Tiffany Hott



Honoree

**Tiffany Hott**  
Founder,

TestQuest, Inc.

In 1993, Tiffany Hott graduated from The University of Pennsylvania Law School and faced a dilemma. She realized that she was more passionate about making a difference in communities labeled “at-risk” than she was at practicing law.

Tiffany was inspired by the pioneering efforts of Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University who developed the theory of multiple intelligences. His work suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is too limited. Instead, he proposes placing equal attention on eight different “intelligences” to account for a broader range of potential in children—such as “word” smart, “music” smart, “people” smart and “numbers” smart. This educational model encourages children to develop their natural ability to be artists, musicians, designers and, fittingly, entrepreneurs.

In 1996, with just \$300, a fax machine and a dogged determination, Tiffany decided to form her own tutoring service. She began by meeting students on the steps of the New York Public Library on 42nd Street. Since then, TestQuest has grown to become a leading provider of supplementary educational services in the tri-state area and one of the largest at-home, one-on-one tutoring programs in New York City.

TestQuest has helped thousands of students improve their grades, raise their test scores, learn productive study skills and build their academic self-confidence. The company offers free services to children and families eligible for the federal *No Child Left Behind* program and is a leading service provider for the NYC foster care community.

In addition to providing tutoring in basic reading, writing, math, science and English language skills, TestQuest also offers assistance with global studies, foreign languages, adult education, standard test preparation, homework help and study skills.

As a result of her commitment to children and the non-profit community, Tiffany has appeared locally on *Channel 7 Eyewitness News*, *Channel 2* and other national media.

Tiffany is a magna cum laude graduate of New York University’s Stern School of Business and speaks Spanish and French fluently.

