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Wisconsin LGBT Chamber Announces Winners of 2020 Business Awards

American Family Insurance recognized as Corporate Partner of the Year

MILWAUKEE – The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce today announced the winners of its 2020 Business Awards, a program that recognizes the contributions made by Chamber members in building a more diverse and inclusive business community in Wisconsin.

“The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce is so proud to recognize these amazing businesses and individuals for all that are doing to build a more welcoming and inclusive business community in Wisconsin,” said Jason Rae, President & CEO of the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce. “These award recipients truly represent the best of Wisconsin. We are thrilled to be able to turn the spotlight on these deserving companies and individuals and showcase the amazing work they are doing.”

Those businesses and individuals receiving awards this year are:

- **Corporate Partner of the Year: American Family Insurance**

This award is given to a corporation that is a member of the LGBT Chamber and has shown a strong commitment to diversity in the workplace and to positively growing the LGBTQ and allied business community. American Family Insurance has been key in growing and supporting the LGBT Chamber by serving as a member since 2016, being a leader in the LGBT Workplace Alliance, which connects area LGBT business groups, and serving as a past host and sponsor of a number of Chamber events, including the annual Madison Area LGBT Business Equality Summit. American Family Insurance, a national company headquartered in Madison, has been committed to inclusive excellence and has led the way in Wisconsin and across the country when it comes to supporting diverse businesses and communities.

- **LGBTQ Business of the Year: Delta Beer Lab** (Madison, WI)

This award is given to an LGBTQ-owned business that is a member of the Chamber, is an active participant in building a more diverse business community in Wisconsin and has a proven track record of success and involvement. Delta Beer Lab is a certified LGBT Business Enterprise by the NGLCC and has been an active participant in the work of the LGBT Chamber. They have also been involved philanthropically in the LGBTQ+ and progressive community, contributing the tips guests leave to a different Nonprofit Partner each month. They are dedicated to building a fully inclusive business community at home and around the state.

- **Allied Business of the Year: Red Shoes Inc.** (Appleton, WI)

This award is given to an allied-owned business that is a member of the Chamber, is an active participant in building a more diverse business community in Wisconsin and has a proven track record of success and involvement. Red Shoes Inc. has participated actively in Chamber events, such as presenting at the 2020 Northeast Wisconsin Business Equality Summit. They have worked intentionally to be inclusive in their new podcast, Sole Source, including doing an episode on the future of LGBTQ rights in the United States.



- **Nonprofit Organization of the Year: Diverse & Resilient** (Milwaukee, WI)
This award is given to a nonprofit organization that is a member of the Chamber, with a proven track record of success and involvement and a commitment to building a diverse community. Diverse & Resilient has been a member since 2014, working closely with the Chamber to advance a diverse and thriving business community. Diverse & Resilient has been a lead partner in the LGBT Workplace Alliance since its founding and has been engaged in numerous events and activities. Their leadership team has also supported employees going through the Business Leadership Academy.
- **Business Leaders of the Year: Rick Clark & BJ Gruling of Kilwins Milwaukee-Bayshore** (Glendale, WI)
This award is given to a hard-working and dedicated individual or individuals who have had a positive professional and personal impact on building a diverse business community in Wisconsin. Rick Clark and BJ Gruling have been passionate leaders in growing the LGBT and small business communities throughout the area. Partners in life and in business, these owners of a nationally certified LGBTBE have been actively engaged in getting more businesses certified. They have attended nearly every Chamber event and have been personal advocates and champions of the Chamber.
- **Advocate of the Year: Refilwe Goll, Northwestern Mutual** (Milwaukee, WI)
This award is given to an individual who has been a strong advocate for inclusion and diversity within the larger business community. Refilwe Goll has been a champion for building a more inclusive supply chain in procurement. She currently serves as the Senior Category Manager & Supplier Diversity Program Manager at Northwestern Mutual. She has been a regular and active participant in the Chamber's Leadership Council and has served on the Board of Northwestern Mutual's LGBT Employee Resource Group. She is committed to creating change and promoting inclusion within her company, and the larger community as a whole.
- **Business Resource Group of the Year: Kohl's #PrideAtKohls** (Milwaukee, WI)
This award is given to a business resource group at one of our corporate partners who works to support and build a culture of inclusion and acceptance. Kohl's #PrideAtKohls group has been a leader in creating a welcoming business environment. The group supports its national partner, The Trevor Project, as well as Courage MKE locally. It also participates in the LGBT Workplace Alliance and helps advocate and support the development of Pride clothing, making a positive impact on the community and within the company.

"Each winner demonstrates a strong commitment to building a diverse business community where all people can thrive," added Rae. "We are so excited to honor these champions of inclusion."

The awards will be presented at the Chamber's Business Awards & Showcase, presented by BMO Harris Bank, on the evening of Tuesday, September 22 online via BoothCentral. The public is invited to attend. Registration is requested and can be done online at www.wislgbtchamber.com/awards.

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce is an organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and LGBT-allied businesses, corporations and professionals throughout the state of Wisconsin. It offers networking opportunities, business development efforts within the LGBT community, and educational programming to its members. The organization has nearly 700 members from around the state. In 2015, the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce received the National Chamber of the Year Award from the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). More information can be found online at: www.wislgbtchamber.com.