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Images available upon request

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YWCA NAMES EIGHT WOMEN AS 2021 CAREER WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT 42nd Anniversary Program to Be Broadcast April 22, 7 p.m. via WCPO 9

CINCINNATI, OH – Eight Cincinnati-area women have been selected as 2021 YWCA Greater Cincinnati Career Women of Achievement, outstanding role models for their leadership, vision, community service and renowned professional success that also embraces the mission of the YWCA.

Due to COVID-19, the women will be profiled and honored in a special television and streaming broadcast instead of the usual annual luncheon. The event continues to be the single largest fundraiser for YWCA Greater Cincinnati, founded in 1868. Proceeds directly support YWCA programs and initiatives focused on empowering women and eliminating racism. Last year YWCA Greater Cincinnati faced unforeseen financial obstacles as it transferred domestic violence shelter residents to motels in order to halt the transmission of COVID-19.

“The YWCA and those they recognize have always been catalysts for change,” says Career Women of Achievement Co-Chair Stacey Browning, managing director of digital portfolio for CincyTech. “Today it’s all the more important and possible for leaders to take action now and leverage the mission of the YWCA to progress empowering women and eliminating racism.”

Browning is leading the Career Women of Achievement effort with Co-Chair Cathy Bernardino Bailey, director, Greater Cincinnati Water Works. Both are past Career Women of Achievement honorees. Bailey believes, “Now more than ever, we need consistent leaders like the YWCA to lead the way for the Greater Cincinnati community. For 153 years, this agency has answered the call to serve the most vulnerable in our community. This television and streaming broadcast event and fundraiser honoring these amazing women demonstrates that the time is now for you, me and many others to support the YWCA as it drives the change that must happen.”

The pair recently announced the eight recipients of the prestigious Career Women of Achievement who will be profiled during the April broadcast.

The 2021 Career Women of Achievement honorees are:

Giovanna Alvarez, Director, Su Casa Hispanic Center

Giovanna is a champion for diversity, inclusion, social justice, and human rights as director of Su Casa Hispanic Center. The organization develops and implements programs serving the needs of Hispanic/Latino and other vulnerable international populations. Over 5,000 individuals are served annually through emergency assistance, case management, family reunification, education, and health promotion efforts. Giovanna's team of 15 employees and up to 120 active volunteers monthly, ensure that the most vulnerable of our region have access to medical, social services, legal representation, educational support, and obtain assistance navigating the different complexities of the American systems.

Originally an attorney from Trujillo, Peru, Giovanna began working in various positions in Florida and then Ohio where her work spanned advocating for immigrants, and migrant farm workers to ensuring the Hispanic/Latino community had supporting services, translation at different court proceedings, educational opportunities, and assistance obtaining basic needs resources.

Under Giovanna's leadership, Su Casa has garnered many awards including the Marian and Donald Spencer Award from the Cincinnati Association, the Bridge Builder Award from Community Action, Sister Dorothy Stang Award from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Missions Office and the LULAC Cincinnati Hispanic Institution of the Year Award.

She says, "As professional immigrant women encounter different challenges within different structures regionally. Some people will judge us for the way we speak; some may discount our education, professional experience, and demonstrated accomplishments. We should not be dismayed. We should be resilient, persevere, and remember where we came from and how far we have walked. We need to remember that we are making a path for the ones that come behind us, and continue advocating for inclusion and equal opportunities for all not only in our region, but also globally".

Achievements

- Social Ventures Partner SVP – Fast Pitch People's Choice Award Winner 2014
- State of Ohio Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan (Governor's Award), Commission for Hispanic Latino Affairs 2012
- NASHMBA National Brillante Award for Excellence in Community Service 2012
- Outstanding Service Award, Center for Clinical and Transitional Science and Training, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital 2011

Vanessa Freytag, President and CEO, 4C for Children

Whether working in the for-profit or non-profit sectors, Vanessa has made extraordinary strides advancing the value of women and families in the region. As one of the area's first female banking senior vice presidents, Vanessa's internal advocacy led to her appointment as Chase Bank's inaugural National Director of Women's Initiative. Her objective: to address the gap in access to credit and capital experienced by woman-owned businesses. This work further fueled her passion and entrepreneurial spirit to found W-Insight, Inc., a company that worked with national financial institutions to improve their reach to woman consumers and business owners. She trained over 3,000 financial professionals.

Vanessa knew there were more uncharted areas to conquer as she co-founded *Women's Business Cincinnati*, the area's first publication devoted solely to professional women's accomplishments. Though she had not studied journalism, the paper reached a remarkable readership of 15,000 its second year, earning her the U.S. Small Business Administration Award as the Midwest Small Business Journalist of the Year.

She could have remained in the for-profit world, but her calling was strong. Vanessa became the first executive director of the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, a role that enabled her to lead research in the areas relevant to women's development and economic success. Her current role followed. She heads a staff of 100 in three offices in 15 Ohio counties as leader of 4C for Children. Her impact is considerable, bringing childcare providers from just 21% meeting vigorous state requirements to a current 96%.

Achievements

- First National Director of Women's Initiative, Chase Bank
- One of eight founders of the Cincinnati Women's Executive Forum
- Board Chair, Hamilton County Human Services Chamber 2019-present
- Co-founder, the first Cincinnati business publication solely dedicated to women's business accomplishments
- Nonprofit CEO of the Year Finalist 2019
- U.S. Small Business Administration Midwest Small Business Journalist of the Year 2006
- YWCA Rising Star 2004

Whitney B. Gaskins, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence and Community Engagement, University of Cincinnati College of Engineering and Applied Science

Trailblazer, mentor, motivator and visionary. Dr. Gaskins is showing the world that women can excel in engineering. As the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering at UC, she went on to become the first woman of color appointed to the Leadership Team composed of Deans in the College of Engineering.

She joined the faculty of the College of Engineering and Applied Science and is the only African American female following an impressive tenure at Toyota Engineering and Manufacturing North America. It was there that she combined her quantitative analysis and engineering skills to develop a new method to forecast potential vehicle part problems using probability and statistics.

Now Dr. Gaskins is further advancing her passion to educate and encourage the world's change makers. As the inaugural Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence and Community Engagement, she spearheads the recruitment, support and retention of marginalized and minority students. She also is the founder of The Gaskins Foundation, a community-based 501c3 non-profit organization that facilitates exposure to STEM engineering among underrepresented K-12 students.

Achievements

- First female and African-American Assistant Dean, UC College of Engineering and Applied Science
- Ohio Department of Higher Education General Education Curriculum Committee for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 2020-present
- Cincinnati Urban League Affirmed Award 2020
- Marian Spencer Equity Ambassador Award, University of Cincinnati 2020
- Dr. Terry Kershaw Legacy and Social Justice Award, UC 2019
- Greater Cincinnati Black History Maker, Cincinnati Regional Chamber 2019
- National Society of Black Engineers Educator of the Year 2016
- YWCA Rising Star 2015

Lisa Kelly, M.D., Taylor Asbury Professor of Ophthalmology; Medical Director Hoxworth Eye Clinics, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine

Dr. Kelly is leveraging her national prominence in the field of ophthalmology by working to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in medicine and addressing the health disparities in ophthalmology. In the U.S., less than 150 of the 18,000 ophthalmologists are African American women. By authoring publications on this imbalance, advocating for an increase in minority students entering medicine, and personally mentoring students at the UC College of Medicine, Dr. Kelly brings a fervent spirit for change.

She led a national campaign to increase underrepresented minority students in ophthalmology, jointly sponsored by two major professional associations. Her inspiration comes from her own experiences as a minority woman graduate of Harvard University, Harvard Medical School, the Johns Hopkins School of Education and the Stanford Medical School Residency Program.

Dr. Kelly was the first woman to head the Cornea Transplant Service at Stanford University, the first woman Chief of Ophthalmology at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital, the first woman Medical Director of the Hoxworth Eye Clinics and the first African American woman in the ophthalmology departments at Southern Illinois, Stanford and the University of Cincinnati. Prior to her tenure at UC she founded her own medical practice in Annapolis, MD, serving thousands of patients with a desire to improve the lives of every individual, especially those with vision loss due to diabetes.

Achievements

- First African American woman in Ophthalmology departments at Stanford, Southern Illinois and UC
- *Cincy Magazine* Top Doctor of Ophthalmology 2020-2021
- Optimum Magestrum UC College of Medicine Teaching Award 2020
- University of Cincinnati College of Medicine Mentor of the Year Award 2018
- American Academy of Ophthalmology Founding Member of the Minority Mentor Committee
- Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology Medical Educator Council

Kelly Kolar-Eyman, President & Founder Kolar Design, Inc.+Kolar Experience Institute

As one of the preeminent designers and connectors of creatives in the region and beyond, Kelly demonstrates daily how creativity intersects with communities and business. She initially began leaving her imprint on a multitude of local signature design projects such as the look for the Cincinnati Bi-Centennial and Tall Stacks events, and branding space at institutions like Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Greater Cincinnati Foundation. Her company has now evolved, working with architects, planners and designers globally to understand the true spirit of a place and measure the behaviors that drive the human experience for business results.

Kelly gleaned her innovative design thinking as a graduate of the UC College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP) where she generously gives back by teaching classes and mentoring young creatives in new paradigms of thinking. She has shaped her career centered on three pillars: arts, education and entrepreneurship, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are at the center of her projects.

The creation of The Kolar Experience Institute connects thought leadership, research, design thinkers, architects, designers and business leaders in developing a deeper understanding of the connections between human experiences and business. Her firm has worked with global businesses and communities in over 15 countries building branded experiences.

Kelly has shown that the creative community can work side by side within cities to co-create and collaborate in transformational endeavors. "Anything is possible as long as the conceptual thinkers are creating a brighter and more enhanced future." she believes. Kelly has mobilized creatives in various types of arts from culinary, music, poetry, industrial, architecture and open spaces to believe that anything is possible as long as one uses imagination, teamwork, inclusion and the belief that every person who believes in the power of possibilities will envision a creative future to help the greater good.

Achievements

- Second Annual Todd Portune Innovation Champion Award from the HCDC Office of Creativity + Innovation for empowering others to innovate and be innovators 2019
- *Cincinnati Enquirer* Woman of the Year 2019
- Women's Business Enterprise National Council, Global Team Vice Chair 2021
- WBEC-ORV Board Member, 2017- present
- ArtsWave Women's Leadership Roundtable 2014-present
- Contemporary Arts Center Trustee 2012-2020

Tashawna Thomas Otabil, Executive Director, TriHealth

In just two years Tashawna has grown physician value based revenue in her managed care division at TriHealth from \$12 million to \$38 million. The division has been recognized as the is the top Accountability Care Organization (ACO) in the nation which brings physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers together to provide coordinated care to Commercial, Medicare, Medicaid patients.

She has somehow found time to author four Amazon best-selling books, *It Takes Money Honey*, *Leadership Tidbits*, *Leadership Tidbits II* and *Unprecedented Times*. All have been published in either 2019 or 2020. They provide inspiration for empowerment and strategies to help women excel in their personal and professional journeys. Tashawna has also demonstrated an innate ability for mentoring women whether it concerns decisions about career roles, negotiating your salaries or taking accountability for relationships. It's a role she considers a combination of consultant, counselor and cheerleader.

In addition to being an advocate for women, Tashawna helped develop and launch TriHealth's first African American employee resource group. Over 200 employees attended the first meeting in November 2020, expressing excitement for a forum encouraging their voices to be heard. Tashawna currently co-leads the leadership development program called BOLD (Building Our Leader Development) for emerging leaders that launched in January. Lastly, Tashawna leads TriHealth's SOAR Service Recovery team, providing opportunities for team members to recover and learn from failed service opportunities.

Achievements

- TriHealth Servant Leader Award 2020
- Bronze Metal Healthcare Financial Leadership Award 2019
- Ohio National Diversity Top 15 Businesswomen 2018
- TriHealth Finance Pillar Performance Award 2018
- Karen Wellington Foundation 2021-present
- St. Aloysius Board of Director 2019-present
- Urban League GSO Board of Directors 2016-present
- Healthcare Financial Management Association Board 2015-2019

Stephanie Smith, Senior Vice President, Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer, Fifth Third Bank

As Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer at Fifth Third Bank, Stephanie is responsible for the comprehensive strategic framework of the bank's inclusion and diversity efforts. This responsibility touches 20,000 employees, 70 regional business resource groups, 14 regional inclusion councils, supplier diversity, workforce diversity and partnering with the government affairs division regarding regulatory and legislative issues related to inclusion and diversity. Stephanie manages a \$2.5 million budget.

Prior to her current position Stephanie was the bank's first director of supplier diversity. She was able to build the foundation for a diversity and inclusion program stemming from that position. Stephanie launched the Unconscious Bias Awareness Program throughout the organization and received approval from the Board of Directors for her ideas, leading to the first Executive Diversity Leadership Council and the bold strategic initiative, "Accelerating Racial Equality, Equity & Inclusion."

Achievements

- Led the development of the Inclusion Toolkit as a resource for employees, customers and the community at 53.com

- Increased the Fifth Third diversity budget by 900%
- National Diversity Council Top 50 Diversity Officers Award 2020
- Career Mastered Diversity Leadership Award 2020
- Ohio Minority Supplier Development Corporation of the Year 2020
- Best of the Decade Supplier Diversity 2019
- Top 25 Women in Power Impacting Diversity 2018
- Service on the boards of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Social Venture Partners and UC Research Institute

Amy Spiller, President, Duke Energy Ohio and Kentucky, Duke Energy

Amy Spiller never sought the spotlight or the C-Suite. But through bringing her inquisitive, open and authentic self to work each day, she continually climbed further up the corporate ladder. Like her parents who worked well into their late-70s, Amy adheres to a similar work ethic-- being hard-working, genuine and respectful.

A lawyer by training, Amy served Duke Energy for a decade as Deputy General Counsel where she shaped Duke Energy's regulatory strategic planning in Ohio and Kentucky. Her work culminated in successfully arguing a case in front of the Supreme Court of Ohio in 2017.

Amy's subsequent background as vice president of government and community affairs prepared her for her current position where relationships with customers and regional leaders are key. For the past year she has advocated for families and businesses impacted by the pandemic. She embodies Duke Energy's purpose: to improve the lives of its customers and the vitality of its communities.

The Duke Energy Foundation, along with Advocates for African Americans, a Duke Energy Employee Resource Group, championed the delivery of \$200,000 to 11 local nonprofits committed to social justice and racial equity across the region. Amy also directed funding toward an ArtsWave grant program supporting Black and Latino artists. This past summer she was named inaugural chair of a Duke Energy engagement and inclusion council that serves over 3,000 employees across the company. The council introduced tactics aimed at helping employees feel valued, empowered and included throughout the organization.

Achievements

- Inaugural Chair of Duke Energy Engagement and Inclusion Council
- Mt. Auburn Development Corporation Board 2021
- Cincinnati Business Committee Board 2018-present
- Cincinnati Center City Development Corp (3CDC) Board 2018-present
- Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber Board 2018-present
- Cintrifuse Board 2018-present
- One NKY Alliance 2018-present
- REDI Cincinnati Executive Committee 2018-present
- United Way Campaign Cabinet 2020

The YWCA Career Women of Achievement program also includes:

• **Presentation of the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Scholarship Award, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee**, to Angela “Angel” Spurlock-Lang. Angel is a gifted artist who serves as an official Self-Advocate with the YWCA Project CARE. She facilitates several art-based workshops and support groups designed to connect clients in a holistic and healing way. Angel’s unbridled enthusiasm and thirst for learning has led to increased responsibilities. She is candid about her personal struggles, shared in a calm and reassuring way which helps others feel at ease.

Angel has been accepted as a student by Mount St. Joseph University. She is highly motivated to become a social worker and eventually an art therapist. The Schmidlapp Scholarship will lessen the financial burden of books and tuition. Angel is a new mother and while her spouse works full-time, their financial situation is strained. Angel is upfront about her suicide attempts leading to hospitalizations, rehabilitation services and therapy. Her journey toward healing has influenced other lives for the better.

Says Holly Watson of Project CARE, “Angel is deserving of this scholarship award because she has faced so many challenges throughout her life yet continues to hold a deep desire to help others. She is sensitive and kind, and her strength, hope and wisdom bring a sense of calmness and clarity to all those she supports.”

• **Presentation of the Mamie Earl Sells Scholarship, presented by Kroger**, to Trinity Robinson. Wall Street beckons Trinity. Upon graduation from Northwest High School, Trinity plans to major in business administration/finance at Ohio University so that she can be among the 10% of women who reach the pinnacle of Wall Street financial success. She is well on her way as a state officer for the Ohio Business Professionals of America, first serving as state secretary and then as president.

Like Ms. Sells, Trinity lifts others up as she serves her school and community—all while working full time as a sales representative, corporate and special event host and a supervisor at Full Throttle Adrenalin Park since 2018 and as a guest advocate at Target since November 2020.

Trinity takes a full complement of advanced placement courses and maintains a GPA of 3.5 while devoting herself to community service and mentoring others. Instructor Peter Clark says, “Trinity volunteers as a teller of the Knights Credit Union, teaches financial literacy skills to elementary students and works with our special needs students to help them attain life skills. She is also active in the Diversity Club, Brothers and Sister United and Driving Angels. Trinity is a natural leader and the level of energy and passion she shows is exceptional. In a word, Trinity is AMAZING.”

Judges for This Year’s Event Were:

Eddie Koen, president and CEO, Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio; James Price, president and CEO, Empower; Dr. Lakshmi Sammarco, Coroner, Hamilton County; and Judge Marilyn Zayas, appellate judge, Ohio’s First District Court of Appeals.

Visit www.ywcacincinnati.org/careerwomen or phone (513) 241-7090 for further information on sponsorships for the high-profile telecast on April 22. It is expected to be watched by over 30,000 viewers.

About the YWCA

YWCA has been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements and addressing issues affecting women, girls, and people of color for 153 years. Every day we stand up for survivors of domestic violence by providing safety, support, and stability. We foster dialog, provide practical resources, educate, and initiate social change that will create a community of peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We do this work boldly, unapologetically, and collaboratively, fueled with the fierce urgency of now. YWCA is a United Way partner agency.

Interviews Available

To interview an honoree, co-chair or YWCA President and CEO Barbara C. Perez, contact Tracy Wells at (513) 361-2126 or twells@ywcacin.org

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