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ANNE M. JANIAC, A FOUNDER OF THE WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND AN INFLUENTIAL LEADER IN THE HUDSON VALLEY'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, TO BE HONORED AT WEDC'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

Newly created Anne M. Janiak Leadership Grant to support women in business, to be launched at the Gala

(White Plains, New York.....July 14, 2022) Nikki A. Hahn, CEO of the **Women's Enterprise Development Center (WEDC)**, an award-winning organization serving Westchester and the Hudson Valley, announced today that **Anne M. Janiak**, a founder of WEDC and a pioneer in helping women achieve economic self-sufficiency and financial stability through entrepreneurship, will be honored with WEDC's **Legacy Award** at the organization's **25th Anniversary Gala** to be held on Thursday, September 15, at 6 p.m., at the Lake Isle Country Club in Eastchester. In recognition of Ms. Janiak's enormous accomplishments, WEDC's Board of Directors is launching that evening the Anne M. Janiak Leadership Grant Program to support WEDC clients who have demonstrated strong leadership skills and achieved success in starting their businesses.

The evening's other distinguished honorees are **Wells Fargo**, which will receive the Community Partnership Award; and **Sawudat Abraham**, Owner of Baby Cubs Day Care, Inc. who will receive the Enterprising Woman Award. The gala will raise critical funds to empower women to build successful businesses. Ticket information: <https://wedcbiz.org/events/category/wedc/>

Anne Janiak stepped down as CEO of WEDC in December 2021, but remains a special advisor to the organization, which in 2021 assisted over 1200 clients and helped to obtain \$2,851,240.00 in financial assistance for business owners, a tremendous feat. Since its inception, WEDC has assisted more than 10,000 businesses.

"It is pretty amazing to realize that Anne started WEDC with a \$10,000 legislative grant and grew the organization into one with a \$2 million budget in 2021," Ms. Hahn noted. "From its inception, the focus has been on women and minority entrepreneurs who lacked access to traditional business and banking resources. Our success is a testament to her foresight and trailblazing mindset."

Throughout her 24-year tenure, Ms. Janiak was instrumental in furthering WEDC's growth, influence, and mission. Among her many achievements were the center's two designations as a Women's Business Center by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in Westchester and the mid-Hudson, the launching of Spanish entrepreneurial training programs in 2000, and partnerships that resulted in expanding programs and services to WEDC clients, and access to capital through microloans.

"She's been a pioneer in so many ways, and an inspiration to all of us who have worked with her," said Ms. Hahn. "With her team, she created a strong foundation through various advocacy efforts on the federal, state, and local levels. Her unstinting efforts on behalf of WEDC changed the lives of thousands of people. The impact has been just tremendous."

Barbara H. Van Bergen president of WEDCs Board of Directors, commented: "Anne's pioneering spirit, her generosity and compassion, and her intelligence and tenacity all contributed to the creation of an extraordinary organization that continues to serve thousands in the Hudson Valley. We are extremely fortunate to have worked with her."

Ms. Van Bergen added that even with WEDC's enormous accomplishments, the award-winning organization, building on its original focus, is looking to increase its presence in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities in the region, expand services, and continue to build the organization's partnerships.

"In today's climate, WEDC's work has become even more essential, as we strive to level the playing field for women and minorities by providing the tools they need to achieve economic parity," Ms. Van Bergen said.

She points out that BIPOC entrepreneurs face greater challenges accessing the resources they need to build successful businesses:

"We need to dismantle barriers and pave the way for racial equality in the small business space. To that end, the training opportunities we offer rival those found at many leading educational institutions. But we also provide high-touch business training, networking, and access to capital. All of this is critically important to low- to moderate-income women and minority small business owners as they move forward. In short, we help make their dreams come true."

About Anne M. Janiak

Ms. Janiak is a founder and served as Chief Executive Officer of the Women's Enterprise Development Center Inc. (WEDC), a nonprofit microbusiness development organization, based in White Plains, New York, from 1997-2021. WEDC helps women and men in the Mid-Hudson Valley and Westchester County achieve economic self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship. She currently is actively involved in community and professional affiliations with both state and national small business development programs and serves as part-time executive director of the Westchester Municipal Officials Association (WMOA). She has been active in women's issues, local government, and public policy matters in Westchester County for more than 30 years. Ms. Janiak is a former Mayor of the Village of Scarsdale, former chair of the Westchester County Women's Advisory Board, and former president of the Scarsdale chapter of the League of Women Voters. For six years she served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC), a national association focusing on expanding

opportunities for women entrepreneurs. She has received numerous awards for her efforts on behalf of women entrepreneurs including Westchester County's Women's Hall of Fame award, the Lois Bronz award for work to promote women in business and MWBEs and most recently the New York State MWBE Impact Award at its 11th Annual "Innovating Forward" Forum. Ms. Janiak serves on the Westchester Community College Foundation Board of Directors and was recently appointed to the New York State Conference of Mayors' (NYCOM), Women's Advisory Committee. She earned a BA in Secondary Education from the Pennsylvania State University and an MA in Women's History from Sarah Lawrence College.

About WEDC

The Women's Enterprise Development Center (WEDC) is a 501(c)(3) corporation, that empowers women entrepreneurs in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley so they can build successful small businesses through access to traditional business and financial resources. WEDC provides comprehensive, high quality business training programs, one-on-one business and loan counseling, networking opportunities, assistance with loan applications for microloans and crowd funding through Kiva Zip, and MWBE certification assistance in English and Spanish. WEDC's overarching goal is to build a vibrant community of women business owners, comprised of start-up and established companies. WEDC serves both women and men. For further information, visit www.wedcbiz.org