

PEOPLE, PLACES, POLITICS & PARTIES *By Lifestyles Editor Audrey J. Bernard*

NMSDC 'leadership awards' gala honors former president Harriet R. Michel

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The premier leadership organization, the **National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)**, was launched to advance business opportunities for certified minority business enterprises and connect them to corporate members. Each year the organization honors its own at an elaborate leadership awards gala that pays tribute to dynamic corporate executives, minority business owners and NMSDC affiliate council presidents for outstanding leadership that has a positive impact on their companies and resonates throughout the NMSDC network.

This year's lavish black-tie event was held on Wednesday, May 18, 2016 in the Grand Ballroom at the New York Hilton, 1335 Avenue of the

success and inspiring others to maximize their potential," explained Wright-Lacy. "A leader establishes a vision, sets direction and provides the guidance needed to reach a goal. Leadership is about passion in pursuit of that vision, in service of others, not oneself."

The acclaimed *Robert M. Stuart Leadership Award*, named for **Robert M. Stuart**, the founding chairman of the Board of the Directors of the National Minority Purchasing Council (later renamed NMSDC), is presented to a leader who has invested their time, energy and passion to advancing opportunities for Minority Business Enterprises in Corporate America. This individual is recognized for their overwhelming support

about her long tenure at NMSDC. Michel spent most of her time thanking various people including current and past board members; and her loyal staff. "The organization's success was not mine alone. My staff worked tirelessly to ensure the success of NMSDC and its valuable mission to make sure minority business partnership builds wealth in minority communities. That's even more important today and everyone involved *must* recommit themselves to that mission." She ended her remarks by thanking NMSDC for honoring her. "Thank you for honoring my body of work in a job that I loved from day one until my last day . . . 22 years later."

The *Catalyst Award* honors a corporate member with five

native corporate leader whose pioneering spirit paved the way for the creation of robust supplier diversity processes throughout a career that spans 10 to 20 years. This year's honoree was **I. Javette Hines**, senior vice president, supplier diversity & sustainability, Citigroup Inc. The *MBE Trailblazer Award* recognized **Bonnie Nijst**, president & CEO, ZEESSMAN Communications, an award-winning brand strategy, marketing and design firm. The award honors the owner of a minority business enterprise (MBE) whose pioneering spirit has laid the foundation of success for other MBEs throughout the NMSDC network.

The *Corporate Clarion Award* recognizes a corporate leader who has trumpeted the

ryn Melton, senior vice president & chief procurement officer, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. The award goes to an outstanding leader whose vision, passion and integrity have proven impactful within the CPO's corporation as well as the larger supplier diversity community.

The pristine awards ceremony culminated with the presentation of the coveted *Vanguard Award* which is presented to an NMSDC affiliate council president who has exhibited leadership in driving the value proposition for minority supplier development among corporate and MBE constituents throughout the NMSDC network. This year's honoree was **Beatrice Louissaint**, president & CEO, Florida State Minority Supplier Development Council,



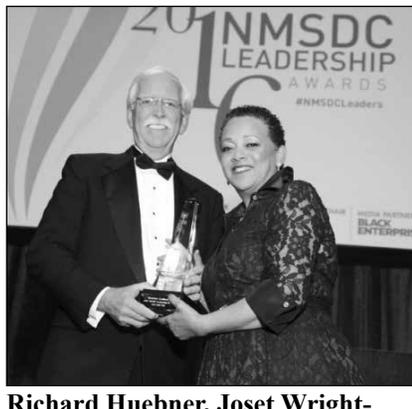
MC David Ushery



Joset Wright-Lacy, Harriet R. Michel



John W. Rogers



Richard Huebner, Joset Wright-Lacy



Joset Wright-Lacy, I. Javette Hines



Bonnie Nijst, Farryn Melton, Joset Wright-Lacy, George Ehr Gott, Shaleta Dunn, Azra Khalfan



Harriet R. Michel's family (l-r) Christopher Michel (son), Dr. Michell Tollinchi-Michel, (daughter-in-law), Monica Richardson Pride (sister), Harriet R. Michel, Yves Michel (husband), Valerie Michel (daughter-in-law), Carolyn Pride (niece)



(front row) Emelda Cathcard, Valerie Michel, Harriet & Yves Michel (back row) Carolyn Pride, Michelle March, Joset Wright-Lacy, Diane Thompson, Monica Pride, Christopher Michel, Dr. Tollinchi-Michel, Ivan Friend

Americas, New York City and was attended by 1,400 dressed to the nines guests that included a cocktail reception, delicious dinner and a stellar ceremony. Emmy Award-winning anchor **David Ushery**, co-anchor of NBC 4 New York's weekday 5:30 newscast, served as Master of Ceremonies. Ushery delighted the crowd with his entertainingly witty one-liners.

From the stage, NMSDC's President **Joset Wright-Lacy** explained what is expected of a leader before presenting the distinguished 2016 leadership awards. "Leadership is not easy to define, but it is an essential element in achieving

and generosity that elevates the entire NMSDC network. This year's fêted honoree **Harriet R. Michel** was NMSDC's former president for 22 years and has worked never-endingly for 50 years in the public sector developing and managing programs that address major social concerns.

Surrounded by her loving and proud family and a host of friends, Michel -- who looked gorgeous in a silver and white jacket and dress from b michael's couture collection -- was interrupted by loud applause several times during her eloquent remarks in which she shared personal anecdotes

to ten years' experience in a corporate supplier diversity role. This year's honoree was **Shaleta Dunn**, supplier diversity & diverse talent initiatives executive, ManpowerGroup of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The *MBE (Minority Business Enterprise) Catalyst Award* was presented to **Azra Khalfan**, CEO, signs & Lucite products, which was founded by her parents. The award goes to the owner of a minority business enterprise (MBE) who has been actively engaged within the NMSDC network for five to 10 years.

The *Corporate Trailblazer Award* is presented to an inno-

value of minority supplier development for more than 20 years. This year's honoree was **George Ehr Gott**, senior manager, strategic sourcing, sustainability & supplier diversity for communications, Test Design, Inc., an independent communications and high-tech repair service provider. The *MBE Clarion Award* honors an inspirational minority business leader with an established record of success for more than 20 years. This year's honoree was **John W. Rogers**, CEO, Ariel Investments, LLC.

The *CPO of the Year Award* was presented to **Far-**

who has helped shape statewide policy for minority business advancement. **Richard Huebner**, president & CEO, Houston MSDC, accepted the award on her behalf.

The Corporate Co-Chair for the 2016 Leadership Awards was Toyota, the MBE Co-Chair was GEP, and the Corporate Plus Co-Chair was World Wide Technology. MetLife was the VIP reception sponsor. *Black Enterprise* was the media partner for the event. For additional information about NMSDC, please visit www.nmsdc.org (Photos by C. G. Taylor and Paul Thompson, for NMSDC)