



## **WomenCorporateDirectors Recognizes Strong Link Between Diversity and Better Financial Performance in Its 2019 Visionary Award Winners**

**BMO Financial Group, Singtel, Hallmark, and Penn Mutual Chairman and CEO Eileen McDonnell to be Honored May 20, 2019, at Global Institute Dinner in Silicon Valley**

**NEW YORK – March 19, 2019** – With women still representing under 25% of senior leadership in companies globally, [only 24 CEOs](#) in the S&P 500, and six CEOs in the FTSE 100, [WomenCorporateDirectors Foundation \(WCD\)](#) is tapping for its **2019 WCD Visionary Awards** four truly notable, time-tested leaders of diversity and inclusion – whose blueprint many companies are now beginning to follow.

Honorees include:

- **Award for Innovation in Shared Value:** [BMO Financial Group \(BMO\)](#), a 200-year old financial services institution and one of the ten largest banks in North America. With five women sitting on its board, BMO also has women in 40% of its senior leadership roles. This award recognizes BMO's stellar leadership in advancing women, environmental stewardship, and financial performance.
- **Award for Leadership and Governance of a Public Company:** [Singapore Telecommunications Limited \(Singtel\)](#), one of Asia's leading communications technology groups. Led by CEO **Chua Sock Koong**, Singtel is Southeast Asia's largest telecommunications company by market capitalization and reaches over 675 million mobile customers in 21 countries. In January, Chua was the first woman appointed to Singapore's Council of Presidential Advisers. The award honors Singtel's commitment to diversity and inclusion and global corporate citizenship.
- **Award for Leadership and Governance of a Private Company:** [Hallmark Cards, Inc.](#), a privately held, family-owned business founded in 1910. Women represent 40% of senior managers and three out of the seven board members at the Kansas City, Missouri-headquartered company. Hallmark, a \$4 billion company employing 30,000 people, is being recognized for its standing as one of the best employers for women and for its global growth and continuous innovation.
- **Award for Strategic Leadership:** [Eileen McDonnell](#), the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of [The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company](#) since 2013. A strong advocate for diversity across the industry, McDonnell leads a gender-balanced board and executive team, which reflects the company's philosophy that inclusivity and diversity generate success. The award recognizes McDonnell's strategic leadership as Penn Mutual has become a leading competitive force in the life insurance industry nationwide.

"This year we selected awardees from Canada, Singapore, and the United States who are powerful role models because they 'walk the walk' through leadership that underscores the interconnectedness of diversity and inclusion in the boardroom and on the senior management team with good corporate governance and consistently strong financial results," says **Joan E.**

**Steel**, co-chair of the Visionary Awards committee. “Public, employee, and investor pressure has been a wake-up call for many organizations, and not having substantive diversity and inclusion efforts is having greater negative consequences for companies’ bottom lines,” says **Barbara Bowles**, committee co-chair with Steel.

WCD established the Visionary Awards in 2011 to recognize companies and leaders demonstrating the best in corporate governance, combining strong performance with leadership around diversity and shared value. “These awards have created a peer group of those who have risen to the top and set benchmarks for what companies can become,” says **Susan C. Keating**, WCD’s CEO. Past Visionary Award winners include **Alaska Air, Publix, L’Oréal, Procter & Gamble, NextEra Energy, The Santander Group, and The Coca-Cola Company.**

The awards will be presented at the **Visionary Awards Dinner** on May 20, 2019, as part of its annual invitation-only [Global Institute \(May 19-22\)](#) in Silicon Valley, whose theme this year is “Harnessing the Transformative Power of Technology.” The hashtag [#WCDSiliconValley](#) can be followed for updates on speakers, panels, special events, and more.

### **2019 WCD Visionary Awards Selection Committee**

The award winners were determined by a committee comprised of WCD members. WCD and the WCD board did not lead or control the nomination or selection process.

#### **Committee Co-Chairs:**

- **Joan E. Steel**, Founder and CEO of Alpha Wealth Advisors, LLC; trustee, Rush University Medical Center.
- **Barbara Bowles**, Presiding Director, WEC Energy Group; retired Vice Chair, Profit Investment Management; retired Chairman, The Kenwood Group, Inc.

#### **Committee Members:**

- Sherry Barrat, Michelle Lynn Collins, Christie Hefner, Ashley Duchossois Joyce, Jill Kanin-Lovers, Deborah Elise Kelly, Izumi Kobayashi, Anastassia Lauterbach, Lucy Pamboukdjian, Theo Schwabacher, Susan S. Stautberg, and Gabrielle “Gaby” Sulzberger.

***Some sessions of the Global Institute and Visionary Awards program will be open to select media. For media inquiries, or media who are interested in attending, please contact Suzanne Oaks Brownstein or Trang Mar of Temin and Company at 212-588-8788 or [news@teminandco.com](mailto:news@teminandco.com).***

#### **About WomenCorporateDirectors Education and Development Foundation, Inc.**

The WomenCorporateDirectors Education and Development Foundation, Inc. (WCD) is the only global membership organization and community of women corporate directors. A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, the WCD Foundation has 80 chapters around the world. The aggregate market capitalization of public companies on whose boards WCD Foundation members serve is over \$8 trillion. In addition, WCD Foundation members serve on numerous boards of large private and family-run companies globally. For more information visit [www.womencorporatedirectors.org](http://www.womencorporatedirectors.org) or follow us on Twitter [@WomenCorpDirs](#), #WCDboards.