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THE ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE APPLAUDS RECIPIENTS OF ITS ANNUAL AWARDS FOR 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 16, 2016) – The Organization of Women in International Trade (“OWIT”) is pleased to announce selection of Ambassador Darci Vetter as the 2015 Woman of the Year, Maricarmen Ahedo as the 2015 Chapter Member of the Year, and OWIT-Chicago as the 2015 Chapter of the Year.

2015 Woman of the Year – Ambassador Darci Vetter, Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the United States Trade Representative, Washington, DC.

Ambassador Darci Vetter is recognized for her outstanding contributions in advancing the role of women in international trade. As Chief Agricultural Negotiator with the rank of Ambassador at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, this accomplished professional - who grew up on a family farm in Nebraska – is responsible for bilateral and multilateral negotiations, such as free trade agreements like the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, and policy coordination regarding agricultural trade. In her role at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as Deputy Under Secretary, Ms. Vetter oversaw the department's international activities. She had key responsibilities in international trade negotiations and export assistance programs, and coordinated USDA's role in international food aid. She also played a leadership role in several international economic development and trade capacity-building programs. “Women have been leaders in international trade for a long time, particularly in Washington, DC, and I’ve been surrounded by strong women and role models since leaving graduate school,” says Ambassador Vetter. “It speaks to OWIT that you are fostering mentorship so there are role models for women in all different aspects of international trade. One of the strengths of OWIT is that you attract women along the whole spectrum of international trade from those who create trade policy to those with businesses that export. We all need each other to ensure agreements and rules are written in a way that makes it easier to do business.”

2015 OWIT Chapter Member of the Year – Maricarmen Ahedo, OWIT Mexico City

Maricarmen Ahedo became a member of OWIT International when she worked to found the Mexico City Chapter in 2009 and has served as the OWIT Representative and primary contact between OWIT International and OWIT activities in Mexico City. She was the President when the Mexico City chapter hosted the highly-successful OWIT International Fall Board meeting in 2010. During a period of dormancy that followed, Maricarmen maintained contact with the OWIT Board and worked to revive the chapter (2014). She currently serves as the Vice President, Partnerships for OWIT Mexico City and in 2015 led major activities such as creating alliances with sister organizations and participating on national councils which raised the profile of OWIT in Mexico. In rebuilding the chapter, Maricarmen has facilitated an active outreach to women and men, earning the chapter recognition from the most recognized Chambers in Mexico. As an entrepreneur, Maricarmen is also an active user of the OWIT

network, which she accesses to seek and to provide business referrals to other OWIT members. “What I value most are the connections I have made through OWIT with so many wonderful women and with whom I have developed both personal and business relationships,” says Ahedo. “My dream is to have OWIT chapters in every Latin American country.”

2015 OWIT Chapter of the Year – OWIT-Chicago

OWIT Chicago has been honoured for its contributions to OWIT International, including promoting it, along with the Chapter to the trade and business community by organizing a number of multi-faceted, accessible programs, webinars, and professional networking opportunities throughout the year. The Chapter partnered with local trade, business and governmental organizations around the globe to successfully host events. It also actively promoted OWIT through various blog posts as well as social media and email outreach. The board of OWIT Chicago includes a diverse swath of the trade community who actively network with other OWIT chapters, thereby not only strengthening intra-chapter communications but also facilitating the exchange of ideas. OWIT Chicago is particularly acclaimed for holding a career panel for students each season to provide information on the field of international trade, for providing job opportunities on its members-only web site, and for taking a lead in supporting local non-profit organizations. “OWIT provides a valuable service and networking for people whose professional lives intersect with international trade,” says **Marty Langtry**, President. “That’s why our chapter works hard to share OWIT’s value with others in the trade community.”

“The 2015 award recipients are all outstanding contributors to OWIT and the broader global trade and business community,” says OWIT International President **Andrea Ewart**. “Each recipient has leveraged her passion and dedication to advance women in international trade and business. Ambassador Vetter plays a pivotal role in policy making at the highest levels of the U.S. government. Maricarmen is championing the expansion of OWIT in Mexico and Latin America. And one of our oldest chapters, OWIT-Chicago has excelled in achieving OWIT’s mission at both the local and global level.

“We celebrate the accomplishments of these award winners. They are stellar examples of what makes OWIT such an extraordinary global organization.”

Interviews with the 2015 OWIT Award recipients, conducted by OWIT International President Andrea Ewart, offer an opportunity to hear from the recipients directly about their accomplishments. To access:

- [Ambassador Vetter](#)
- [Maricarmen Ahedo](#)
- [OWIT Chicago](#)

About OWIT

Founded in 1989, The Organization of Women in International Trade International (www.owit.org) is a voluntary, non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing global trade opportunities for women through networking and educational programs. It is comprised of more than 2,000 members in local chapters operating in the Americas, Europe, and Africa as well as “virtual” chapter comprised of individuals who do not reside or work in localities with a local OWIT Chapter.