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Optical Women's Association Announces 2024 Award Honorees

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The Optical Women's Association (OWA) has announced their 2024 OWA award honorees:

Rebecca Giefer, CEO of MODO Eyewear, will receive the **Pleiades Award**, recognizing her exceptional dedication and support in advancing the leadership role of women in the optical industry.

Trudi Charest, President of Total Focus Consulting and Co-Founder of Marketing4ECPs, is the **Pyxis Award** honoree, acknowledging her service and commitment to growing the OWA and promoting it throughout the optical industry.

Reagan Colpitts, Senior Business Development Manager at Safilo, will receive the **Emerging Leader Award**, given to rising stars within the optical industry who display exemplary leadership qualities.

And for only the second time in OWA history, a **Lifetime Achievement Award** will be presented this year to founding OWA member **Marge Axelrad**, Senior Vice President and Editorial Director for Vision Monday/VMAIL, part of the Jobson Optical Group.

Dr. Lorie Lippiatt, OWA President, had this to say: "On behalf of the entire OWA Board of Directors, I would like to congratulate our 2024 awardees! Each year at the highly anticipated Vision Expo East [Champagne Breakfast](#), we honor select women who have had a meaningful impact on their peers, companies, the OWA membership, and our beloved industry. Rebecca, Trudi, Reagan, and Marge have all made impressive contributions over the course of their respective careers. They share in common the passion and desire to see women excel in leadership roles, and they set an amazing example of what "great" looks like. I am inspired by each of their stories, the intense dedication they have for our industry, and the support and direction they have provided to so many. I invite you all to join me in celebrating with them in March!"

The award recipients will be honored at the OWA's annual Champagne Breakfast on Thursday, March 14, 2024, during International Vision Expo East. Sponsored by **EssilorLuxottica** and the OWA, this event will once again be held at Gotham Hall in New York City. For more information, [click here](#).

About the Honorees

Marge Axelrad was hired in May of 1988 as the editor-in-chief of *Vision Monday*, a year after its launch. At Vision Monday, originally a print newsmagazine when it started in 1987, Axelrad and the team she created redefined and shaped news coverage of the optical business as the industry was expanding significantly in all sectors.

In 1998, *Vision Monday* inaugurated **VMAIL**, a weekly digital newsletter. **VMAIL** is now published daily and has become the primary delivery vehicle for news developments with readership throughout the U.S. and international optical communities.

Axelrad also oversaw the launch of **VisionMonday.com**, which complemented and enhanced the distribution of *Vision Monday's* print edition and **VMAIL**; in 2007, she played an instrumental role in the launch of the **Vision Monday Leadership Summit**, which is now regarded as a key and influential gathering of the industry's leading decision makers.

Axelrad is a founding board member of the **Optical Women's Association (OWA)** (1997), served as co-president of the group (2000-2002), and is currently on the OWA Nominating Committee. She was honored by the OWA in 2013 as a **Pleiades Award** recipient.

In 2017, Axelrad was recognized as the **Prevent Blindness "Person of Vision."** She served on the national board of Prevent Blindness America (2009–2013) and continues to help its development committee. She currently serves on the board of trustees of the **SUNY College of Optometry Foundation**. In 2008, Axelrad was recognized by the Accessories Council with its "Hall of Fame" award and in 2011 was honored by SUNY's Optometric Foundation.

The Jobson Optical Group, a division of WebMD, announced in November 2023 that, after 35 years in the optical/eyecare field, Axelrad has decided to retire, effective March 31, 2024. She continues to play a role for Jobson during this transition period, active in monitoring industry news and key developments in the industry. She will represent Jobson at key industry meetings and events in the U.S. and internationally, and will play a key role in the upcoming Vision Monday Leadership Summit in March, prior to Vision Expo East 2024.

Rebecca Giefer, CEO for Modo, has a distinguished career marked by commitment to client relations, leadership, and strategic growth initiatives. She has a solid foundation in team building, based on her past experience as a collegiate soccer player at NYU, and a reputation for cultivating a culture of collaboration, work ethic, and excellence. Her leadership style inspires teams to surpass targets and achieve remarkable results. Her mantra is not original and has been used by many before her: "true leaders raise leaders who raise leaders." Her unwavering commitment to customer-centric solutions is rooted in her start at Modo, where she began as a temporary employee on Modo's customer service team. Rebecca wore various hats throughout her tenure at Modo; noteworthy positions include Manager of Customer Service, Director of Operations, and beginning in 2010, Vice President of Operations. In 2014, she became the COO, and in 2020, was appointed CEO.

Giefer, a current member of the Optical Women's Association, served on The Vision Council's Board of Directors for six years, was part of their Emerging Optical Leaders Committee, chaired their Marketing Committee, and also participated in their DEI task force.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to the business landscape, Giefer has twice been honored as one of *Vision Monday's Most Influential Women* - first in 2016 in the "Executive Suite" category, and then in 2023 in the "Above and Beyond" category.

Her professional journey is characterized by an unwavering dedication to delivering value to various stakeholders and a strong work ethic. She currently lives in the vibrant borough of Brooklyn with her husband David and 7-year-old son Owen.

Trudi Charest is the Co-Founder of Marketing4ecps, a digital marketing agency focused on building digital advertising for the eyecare industry, and President of Total Focus Consulting. She doesn't just "talk" the digital marketing talk, she walks it every day in her own social and digital efforts. With over 10,000 followers on LinkedIn, she is known as a LinkedIn guru by her peers. She also heads up the Digital Marketing Committee for the Optical Women's Association, leading a team of 17 women volunteers who create the social media strategy for the OWA. Charest is well known for designing, developing, and facilitating sales training and marketing programs across North America.

Charest is a licensed optician with over 25 years of extensive eyecare experience, and also holds a Human Resource Management certificate from the University of Calgary. Before starting her marketing agency, Marketing4ECPs, in 2015, her experience included corporate training in retail optical, territory management for Bausch & Lomb, clinical consulting with Optos, and the role of Vice President of Marketing and Training for Eye Recommend, one of Canada's leading optometric buying groups.

She is an "Amazon Best Selling" author of the book, *The Digital Sales Rep*, a literary guide to social and digital sales techniques and the art of personal online branding.

Charest was one of *Vision Monday's Most Influential Women* in the optical industry and is currently a very active OWA board member, co-chairing their Digital Marketing Committee. She is an international speaker, author, industry consultant, and business innovator.

Reagan Colpitts is the Senior Business Development Manager at Safilo, spearheading go-to-market strategies for the North American sales team while also leading buying groups and strategic alliances in the USA. With 15 years of leadership experience, she has dedicated the last decade to the optical industry.

Armed with a degree in economics, she embraces her self-proclaimed status as an analytical nerd and has a genuine passion for business. She loves to bring elements from outside the optical industry into her role, and often looks for inspiration from other industries to help keep a fresh perspective.

In 2022, Colpitts was honored as one of *Vision Monday's Most Influential Women in Optical*. In 2023, she was awarded an OWA Leadership Scholarship, a testament to her commitment to continually

enhance her business knowledge and skills.

Beyond her professional achievements, she strives to be a strong role model for her two children, showing them that there are no limits for working moms!

Please visit www.opticalwomen.com for more information.

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About the Optical Women's Association: Founded in 1997 as a nonprofit, the Optical Women's Association is committed to supporting and promoting the professional development of women involved in all facets of the optical industry. As the vision of the OWA evolves and expands, it maintains the focus of the OWA's founding principles and core mission: to enhance and promote the leadership role of women in the optical industry through networking, education and peer support.