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OWA SELECTS 2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS AND DEBUTS NEW CHAMPAGNE BREAKFAST EVENT

DALLAS, TX - January 5, 2015 - The Optical Women's Association (OWA) has selected Maureen Cavanagh, president of the Vision Impact Institute, supported by Essilor, as its 2015 Pleiades award recipient, and Amy Spiezio, executive editor of Eyecare Business as its 2015 Pyxis award recipient, to be honored at two events in 2015 - the **new OWA Champagne Breakfast** to be held on Thursday, March 19th at 7:30 to 9:00 am at the New York Marriott Marquis, Times Square, and the traditional **Star Award Ceremony and Networking Event** on Friday March 20th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Calvin Klein showroom at 654 Madison Avenue.

"We wanted to create a new event where attendees could learn more about our award winners and raise a glass in their honor," explains Christie Walker, OWA president. "Both the Pleiades and the Pyxis awards will still be presented at the Friday night **Star Awards Ceremony and Networking Event** hosted by Marchon. The Thursday morning **Champagne Breakfast**, hosted by Luxottica, will give attendees the opportunity to hear short presentations from our honorees, and also enjoy insights from our keynote speaker, Holly Rush, president of Luxottica Wholesale North America."

Rush joined Luxottica as senior vice president, sales in March 2011 and in less than three years led her team to unprecedented growth, doubling the business and executing a complete turnaround in the US. In 2012, she was voted one of the "*Most Influential Women of the Year*" by Vision Monday for her contributions to the optical industry and most recently received a Luxottica founder's award for demonstrating one of the company's core characteristics of "Entrepreneurship."

Pleiades award honoree, Maureen Cavanagh, is a strong advocate for women in leadership roles. She currently mentors several women in business and was integral in the launch of the Diversity and Inclusion initiative at Essilor. Cavanagh has served as keynote speaker on topics of inspiring change and was a guest on the Power Hour radio show, advocating on behalf of women taking control of their own career development. In 2011 she was recognized as one of Vision Monday's "*Most Influential Women of the Year*."

"I am honored and grateful to be receiving this award. The OWA is such a tremendous support group of exceptionally talented women who believe that we do make a difference either in a board room, in business or living our day-to-day lives," said Cavanagh.



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Pleiades is a star cluster the constellation of Taurus. The Pleiades is also known as the "Seven Sisters" - referring to the seven brightest stars in the cluster. Together these stars create one of the brightest clusters visible in the northern hemisphere, just as by working together, the women of the OWA have created an organization that is bigger and brighter than the sum of their individual efforts.

Pyxis award honoree, Amy Spiezio is the executive editor of Eyecare Business magazine and has been with the publication for 13 years. Spiezio has served on the OWA board for nine years, acting as the secretary/treasurer for several terms. Her tenure in the organization has included involvement on many committees, particularly communications, mentoring, and the programs committee.

"I am so pleased, honored and surprised to be named the Pyxis award recipient," said Spiezio. "This award is near and dear to my heart. From its inception, it was designed to recognize people who help the Optical Women's Association grow and flourish."

Pyxis is a constellation in the southern sky known as "The Compass" and like a compass the Pyxis award honoree helps guide the organization by her leadership and example.

About the Optical Women's Association: The Optical Women's Association is a non-profit organization founded in September of 1997 with the mission of supporting and promoting the professional development of women in the optical industry. Projects and programs the Connection Series, providing women in the optical industry with personal and professional growth opportunities; networking events at both Vision Expo East and West; and the annual Star Award Ceremony and Networking event, which recognizes and honors individuals who have made a significant difference for women in the optical industry.

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