



14070 Proton Rd, Suite 100 LB9  
Dallas, TX 75244  
P: 972.233.9107 F: 972.490.4219  
office@opticalwomen.com  
www.opticalwomen.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT: Dave Beebe  
[office@opticalwomen.com](mailto:office@opticalwomen.com)

## **OPTICAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION BOARD APPOINTS SIX NEW DIRECTORS**

DALLAS, TX - September 22, 2015 - This month, the Optical Women's Association (OWA) welcomes six new board members: Katherine Allen, Maureen Cavanagh, Jennifer Jackson, Janet Johnson, Valerie Manso, ABOC, FNAO and Tammy Reaves. These talented women were chosen for their career achievements and their commitment to the OWA's goals of Connecting, Inspiring and Leading women in the optical industry.

"Our new board members bring with them talent and enthusiasm for the OWA and its mission. We both welcome our new members and thank the four board members who are stepping down off the board," said Christie Walker, immediate past president of the OWA. "I know our new president, Heather Smith, and the board, will do an amazing job of leading this group of professional women in bringing the OWA to new heights."

Having fulfilled their terms, the following board members are stepping down: Ann Englert, Debra Forstenzer, Liz Segre and Barbara Wagner. These women have been highly instrumental in elevating the OWA to new heights with their significant contributions, enthusiasm and achievements. During their time on the board, they have shown tremendous commitment to the OWA's goals of Connecting, Inspiring and Leading women in the optical industry.

The new executive committee consists of:  
President – Heather Smith  
Vice President – Tiara Claxton  
Secretary/Treasurer – Jean Sabre  
Immediate Past President – Christie Walker

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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## **BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SIX NEW MEMBERS OF THE OWA Board**

### **Katherine Allen**

During her 14-year stint in the optical industry, Katherine Allen has managed four practices and performed every related task, from pre-test and billing to lab work and helping patients find their personal eyewear style. She discovered her passion for marketing while working for eye care practitioners but moved to the manufacturing arena, where she could use both her industry knowhow and her organizational communication degree from the University of Michigan. In her current role as marketing manager for Luneau Technology Group – North America, she facilitates and manages marketing for the group's three brands.

Katherine joined the OWA in 2012 and has served as vice-chair of the Communications Committee.

### **Maureen Cavanagh**

A 23-year veteran in the optical industry and a certified optician, Maureen is president of the Vision Impact Institute, currently supported by Essilor. The Institute's mission is to raise awareness of the importance of healthy vision, including the socio-economic impact of uncorrected refractive errors and quality-of-life benefits of visual correction.

Maureen received the Pleiades award from the Optical Women's Association in 2015 in recognition of her efforts to advance the leadership role of women in our industry. She mentors several women in business and was integral in the launch of the Diversity and Inclusion initiative at Essilor. In 2011 *Vision Monday* named her one of the Most Influential Women in Optical in the "Executive Suite" category.

### **Jennifer Jackson**

Jennifer has been in the optical industry for 15 years and is the associate vice president for the western U.S. for Marcolin Eyewear USA. She has been with Marcolin/Viva for five years, holding positions as a regional manager and regional director before taking on her current role.

In 2013 she received the *Vision Monday* Most Influential Women in Optical award in the "Mentoring" category. She believes in developing a strong team. She is dedicated to mentoring and giving back to her industry, as she has had many great mentors in her career. Jennifer is a mother of four and a grandmother.

## **Janet Johnson**

Janet is director of Acuitas Product (USA and Canada) for Ocuco Inc., which provides software for optical retailers and labs. A registered licensed optician in Canada, Janet began her career at an ophthalmology group in the early 1980s. She became assistant manager for Essilor Canada but later returned to retail and supervised a high-end boutique chain and a national department store chain in Canada.

Janet says she found her niche in optical software, and this led to her move to the United States. For the past 18 years, she has designed retail and clinical software applications for the North American market. She has been highly involved in managed care and is known as one of the top experts in third party insurance. *Vision Monday* recognized Janet in the "Executive Suite" category of its Most Influential Women in Optical list in 2011.

## **Valerie Manso, ABOC, FNAO**

Valerie is the vice president of sales and education for Blutech Lenses. As a 40-year-plus veteran of the optical industry, she brings a wealth of expertise to her current role. In 1992 Valerie started Manso Management Resources Inc., a consulting company focused on training, business development and organizational development within the ophthalmic industry. She continues to use her skills and experience with a variety of clients on a project basis.

In addition to her work in our industry, Valerie has been a member of Toastmasters International since 1997; is a founding member of the Optical Women's Association; and was selected as one of the Most Influential Women in Optical in 2003, the inaugural year for this prestigious award offered by *Vision Monday*.

## **Tammy Reaves**

As vice president of development and licensing for Pearle Vision, a Luxottica brand, Tammy leads the division's business development strategy across North America. Since assuming the role in 2012, she has been credited with driving record-breaking year-over-year financial and eye care center growth.

During her nearly 20-year tenure at Luxottica, Tammy was also Pearle Vision's vice president of operations, guiding the brand's corporate and licensed operations strategy. And she led Pearle Vision's National Franchise Advisory Council and Optometric Advisory Council. In 2010 Tammy received a *Vision Monday* Most Influential Women in Optical award in the "Mentors" category. She says she enjoys mentoring optometry students as well as emerging talent at Luxottica.