



NEWS RELEASE

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Bosnia Memory Project at Fontbonne University Recognizes Midwest BankCentre with Inaugural Community Leader Award

ST. LOUIS, MO. (March 29, 2018) – **Midwest BankCentre**, a leading community investor in the **Bosnia Memory Project** at **Fontbonne University**, was recognized on March 27 with the inaugural **Bosnia Memory Project Community Leader Award**. The awards event attracted more than 100 Bosnian business leaders, bank customers, Fontbonne representatives and community members.

“Midwest BankCentre has been a leader in community engagement and in serving St. Louis’ Bosnian community,” said **Dr. Ben Moore**, co-founder and director of the Bosnia Memory Project, which is dedicated to establishing an enduring record of Bosnian genocide survivors, especially those living in metropolitan St. Louis. “The bank has done exemplary work with such organizations as the International Institute, Beyond Housing, and the Bosnia Memory Project, working collaboratively to reach the underserved.”

The Bosnian population in St. Louis totals more than 60,000, many of whom are served by 17 Bosnian-speaking Midwest BankCentre team members working at five of the bank’s 19 branches: Bevo, Lindbergh, Lemay, Oakville and Grand. St. Louis is home to the largest Bosnian community outside of Bosnia. Nearly all these community members came to St. Louis as a result of the war and genocide perpetrated in Bosnia from 1992-1995. Bosnians were allowed to immigrate to the U.S. as refugees, and St. Louis became a preferred destination due to the availability of jobs and inexpensive housing. Today, they are homeowners, business owners and significant contributors to the local economy and culture.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to be deeply invested in the Bosnia Memory Project at Fontbonne,” said **Jim Watson**, chairman and chief executive officer of Midwest BankCentre. “Over the past several years, we’ve developed strong bonds with Bosnian-American immigrants as both employees and customers of Midwest BankCentre. More than 25 percent of our 19 branches are staffed by at least one employee whose native tongue is Bosnian. Our community banking relationships have helped a number of local businesses start up and grow as family businesses and reliable employers.”

Editor's note: Midwest BankCentre has been a mainstay of St. Louis community banking since 1906. With a staff of nearly 300 working at 19 bank locations in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Jefferson County and St. Charles County, it ranks among St. Louis' largest locally owned banks with assets of about \$1.9 billion and deposits of \$1.4 billion. It provides integrated financial services with expertise in commercial, retail and digital banking; business cash management; mortgage lending; consumer lending; and insurance. www.midwestbankcentre.com

Fontbonne University is a Catholic institution of higher education offering liberal arts and professional programs, as well as evening and online formats for busy adults. Fontbonne was founded in 1923 and is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. www.fontbonne.edu



More than 100 Bosnian business leaders, Midwest BankCentre customers, Fontbonne representatives and community members attended the first Bosnia Memory Project Community Leader Award presentation to Midwest BankCentre on March 27. Gathering for the occasion were (from left) Midwest BankCentre Chairman and CEO Jim Watson, Fontbonne University President Michael Pressimone, Bosnian business leader and bank board member Ibrahim Vajzovic, and Dr. Ben Moore, co-founder and director of the Bosnia Memory Project at Fontbonne.