



By Amanda Gianotti

February 28, 2024

For Immediate Release

As the Award Associates of America celebrate their 50th year, they are also making history by appointing their first female president. In Las Vegas, Amanda Gianotti, CRS accepted the torch passed to her by Keith Baldwin, who had led this group since 2014. Prior to Keith's 10 year term, the AAA was led by John Keegan, Charles Brown, Dave Tallaksen and Walt Bardy.

Incorporated in 1974, the Award Associates' mission is to combine the purchasing power of the members allowing them to manufacture products efficiently and increase profitability. They also benefit from reduced equipment costs and the sharing of best practices to further enhance the success of their businesses. This premier group consists of 66 of the top award manufacturers/retailers in North America, with nearly 100 locations nationwide. The organization's ongoing mission and vision is to continually discover, test and implement new technology and product designs empowering its members to dominate their local markets. Spanning over five decades, the Award Associates have often been the first to help test and market new innovations in equipment.

The AAA family is a cohesive and powerful organization where members know and support one another. They give freely of themselves, many serving on multiple committees to help discover and share ways to help their businesses grow independently. "I am so proud to lead this group of talented and successful business people. We are the best of the best and to think I'm leading this group of super smart and successful awards businesses is a bit daunting" said Amanda Gianotti, the newly appointed President of the Award Associates. To quote the founder of our warehouse in Georgia, the late Joe Rutherford, "When you join AAA, you are a member of the family. If you need anything, just call someone and they will help or find someone that can help."

“An even bigger benefit than increased profitability, is the lifelong friendships I’ve made. You can’t buy that anywhere. That is what I call ...priceless.” Amanda said. “These friendships put added pressure on me to do a great job. I certainly don’t want to let down my friends. Luckily I have a strong board of directors to help me. Steve Gibson from American Awards in Ohio is our talented executive director and I am looking forward to working with him and the rest of our leadership team.”

Amanda Gianotti, CRS shouldn’t be too concerned about letting down her friends. February of 2024 marked her 36th year in the industry. “I am proud of Allogram’s growth under my leadership. I think if you ask my parents, they’d tell you how proud they are too. Many businesses fail after being passed to the second generation. My oldest daughter, Amber Reisinger, joined Allogram in 2016, paving the way for our 3rd generation to exceed everything I’ve accomplished. I’m looking forward to experiencing the pride my parents have.”

Amber manages the Baltimore, MD store which enabled Amanda to open the Norfolk, VA store in January of 2020. It was terrible timing given the pandemic that severely limited both stores’ sales. Allogram acquired G&W Gifts and Awards of Distinction, and formed Allogram South dba G&W Awards by Allogram South on January 1, 2020. Bruce Gilbert, president of G&W Brokerage was an Award Associate member since 1997, served on the board for 8 years and many committees including chairman of the membership committee. Bruce was also Amanda’s mentor when she first joined the association in 2006.

Amanda has benefited from many mentors over her 36 years in the industry. She started her career in 1988 learning from her father, a Harvard MBA. During the pursuit of her CRS in the 90’s, she met Bill Fairless, the late national sales manager for Marco Awards Group. Sometime in the mid 2000’s, Bill Fairless recommended Allogram to the membership committee of the Award Associates. Bill is quoted as saying, “One day she’ll be running that group.” That day arrived on February 5th at their 2024 Winter Meeting.

“The Award Associate family is a valued part of my work family. I am proud to call them my friends. If you don’t qualify for membership in the AAA but you’d like to grow your business and possibly join one day, then the best thing you can do is be active in the APA. Membership in the APA provides access to resources, a network of like minded individuals and information critical to growing your business. One day you may be blessed to call the network of people you meet in the APA your work family.”

If you want to learn more about the Award Associates, the Membership Chairperson is Troy Zoller ([troy@vanwaytrophy.com](mailto:troy@vanwaytrophy.com)) and the Purchasing Chairperson is Charlie Drago ([Charlie@mtsawards.com](mailto:Charlie@mtsawards.com)) or you can visit their website <https://www.awardassociates.com>