

Virtu, Citadel, BofA, UBS, Clear Street, OCC and Clearbridge Highlight 2021 STA Women in Finance Awards

On December 8, STA recognized the 2021 recipients of the STA Women in Finance (WIF) Awards in a virtual ceremony. In addition to the annual Ken Heath and Mentor of the Year Awards, STA also honored the recipients of the inaugural Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Award.

Kicking off the ceremony, STA President and CEO Jim Toes took a moment to highlight the mission and goals of the STA WIF Committee, thanking Co-Chairs Kate McAllister of Global Liquidity Partners and Julie Andress of KeyBanc Capital Markets, as well as the awards committee and those who submitted nominations.

The first honorees of the night were **Doug Cifu, CEO, Virtu Financial** and **Christy Moccia, Chief Compliance Officer, Clear Street**, who were presented with the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Award. The award aims to recognize the efforts of top industry leaders in promoting and implementing diversity within their organizations.

“Diversity and inclusion initiatives are much more effective and result in lasting change when they are championed from the top of an organization and through sincere actions,” said Toes in presenting the award. “C-suite executives who lead by example inspire others within their organization to do so as well.”

“This award is deeply moving and personal to me. At Clear Street, I’ve witnessed the immense value that is created when there are diverse voices in the room,” said Moccia. “I truly believe that diverse ways of thinking and differing perspectives are the very qualities that drive innovation and move our industry forward.”

Cifu echoed these remarks, noting that promoting opportunities for women in the industry must be a firm-wide effort. “I really would like to share this award with all the wonderful people at Virtu who spend countless hours doing their best to create an environment where women feel they can succeed and grow,” he said.

Following the acceptance speeches from Cifu and Moccia, McAllister continued the ceremony by introducing the winners of the Ken Heath Award, which highlights the efforts of men who provide a substantial platform to catapult women into leadership roles and open doors for opportunity. This year’s recipients were **Todd Lopez, Head of Electronic Trading, UBS**; **Joe Mecane, Head of Execution Services, Citadel Securities** and **Michael Lynch, Managing Director, Bank of America Securities**.

McAllister noted the importance of sincerity in creating opportunities for women in finance, and Lopez agreed. “It’s an absolutely critical attribute of a good leader. It allows you to build trust and credibility,” he said.

“Diversity is more than just the right thing to do. The data is clear: There’s a robust business case to make for diversity that’s been reaffirmed for many years,” said Lopez. Continuing the panel, Mecane highlighted the accomplishments of several high-profile women in the industry and noted the “humbling” outreach he received following the announcement of the award.

The final panel of the evening, moderated by **CNBC's Sue Herera**, recognized the 2021 recipients of the Mentor of the Year Award: **Julie Bauer, Chief External Relations Officer, OCC; Lisa Utasi, Director, ClearBridge Investments** and **Jennifer Fagenson, Head of Equity Product, DASH Financial Technologies**. The Mentor of the Year Award recognizes women who demonstrate outstanding guidance and serve as role models for women across the financial industry. Bauer began the discussion by identifying key steps to growing genuine relationships, most notably using one's voice to create a supportive environment. One theme highlighted by the panelists was the impact of COVID-19 and hybrid work environments on mentoring, as face-to-face interaction is often key to building these relationships – an especially relevant topic given recent developments with the Omicron variant.

"As we acclimate back to our offices, however many days that may be, we really have to embrace the opportunity to be together," said Utasi. "We have to put purpose in our relationships."

To close out the discussion, Herera asked the panelists to touch on their experiences not only as mentors, but as sponsors eager to advocate for others in their environment. Each panelist also spoke on how the process of finding a mentor requires equal effort on both ends – to remain a source of support and knowledge, one must present themselves as such.

"A big part of being a good manager is truly caring about the people that work on your team and creating a path for success," said Fagenson.

Following the panels, McAllister delivered closing remarks, again congratulating each recipient on behalf of the STA Women in Finance Committee for their efforts in opening doors for women across the financial industry.