

2007 AWARD RECIPIENTS



Small Business Diversity Advocate of the Year *Shirley Mills* USC

The Small Business Diversity award honors an individual who has fulfilled a commitment

to support minority entrepreneurship and efforts to encourage and assist minority and women owned businesses.

Shirley D. Mills is Director of Government and Community Relations for the University of South Carolina. In that capacity, she is the University's liaison to local governments, the state legislature, and the community. She is also responsible for establishing and maintaining university/community partnerships and, in conjunction with other university departments and personnel, fostering diversity and interracial respect and appreciation within the University. Prior to her current position, she worked ten years as Special Assistant to United States Senator Fritz Hollings. In 2005 she started her own small business, SDM & Associates, a governmental relations firm.

A 1979 graduate of Columbia College, Shirley is a native of Sumter, South Carolina and currently lives in the city of Columbia. She serves on numerous community boards and committees, including the Columbia Development Corporation Board of Directors; the Palmetto Health Foundation Board of Directors; the Domestic Abuse Center Board of Directors; the Capital City Performing Arts Foundation Board of Directors; the Columbia College Board of Visitors; the TRIO Advisory Committee; the National Youth Sports Program Advisory Council; the City of Columbia Homeless Task Force (past); Big Brothers/Big Sisters Board of Directors (past); Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce Women and Minority Business Council; Fighting Back Community Incentives Committee (past); and the Transition Team for former Governor Jim Hodges.

She is married to Heyward Bannister and enjoys politics, theater, and tennis.



Small Business Person of the Year *Jay Wedeking* SOHO HERO

The Small Business Person of the Year award recognizes the men and women who, throughout their independent entrepreneurial spirit, play a vital role building our community and its economy.

Jay is the owner of SOHO Hero that opened for business December 15, 2005 at 100-3 Forum Drive in the Village at Sandhill.

Community activities are a strong part of Jay's success and include:

- Active member of St. David's Episcopal Church.
- Advisor to His Hands Ministry. A non-denominational group who feed lunch to the homeless every Saturday at Suggs & Kelly parking lot on Huger Street.
- Past president board member of God's Storehouse. The Christian Crisis ministry for Northeast Columbia supplies food, clothing and household items to individuals and families that are financially in crisis.
- Board member of the American Red Cross Advisory Board for Platelets and Plasma. Serves on the committee for recruiting and retention of donors.
- An active Platelet and plasma donor (up to 24 times a year).
- Supporter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research fund.
- Sponsor of the International White-water Kayaking competition held this summer.
- Numerous printing projects for the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

Jay has been married for thirty-three years has two daughters and one granddaughter.



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Volunteer of the Year

Todd Wagstaff
Comfort Services

Without a strong volunteer base the chamber would not be able to thrive and grow. Our volunteers number over 500 from more than 2,000

participating companies. Each year we recognize one special volunteer for their outstanding service.

Todd is currently the General Manager of Comfort Services of the Midlands, a West Columbia based company providing superior air-conditioning and heating sales and service to residential and light commercial customers. His vision follows the company's focus of taking care of the customer first while creating an environment that encourages employees to reach their potential while having fun and giving back to the community.

Committed to the growth of the Midlands and the State of South Carolina, Todd constantly strives to support the area through his time and efforts. He actively supports the Irmo Chamber, the Lexington Chamber and is very involved with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce. He is also proud to be a member of the current (2008) Leadership Columbia Class.

Currently Todd serves as the Chair of the Business at Midday, Executive Committee for the GCCC and the Total Resource Campaign Team Captain for the Comfort Services team. He is newly appointed to the Board of Directors for GCCC and is a past Diplomat which he was recognized as Diplomat of the month in 2006.

Todd is married to his best friend, Deb; they have two lovely children Lauren (7) and Clark (2) as well as two dogs, Harley and Jake. He currently resides in Forest Acres and is a member of Shandon United Methodist Church where he currently serves on the Long-Term Strategic Planning Task Force and the Grounds Committee, as well as being a Church Greeter and Usher among other past involvement.



Women in Business Advocate of the Year

Barbara Blau

DP Professionals, Inc.

The Women in Business Advocate of the Year award honors an individual who strives to promote the development of women in the workplace and who has chosen to support the role of women in the workplace through either a leadership role or as a role model in their chosen profession.

Barbara Blau is founder and president of DP Professionals, Inc., a full service employment agency that specializes in recruiting highly-qualified information technology professionals for contract employment and direct placement.

Ms. Blau, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, has served the South Carolina personnel industry as a recruiter and manager since 1984. Her diversified recruiting experience includes permanent and contract staffing placement of individuals to work on mainframe, midrange and client/server platforms for the insurance, utility, manufacturing, banking and health care industries, as well as government and non-profit organizations in South Carolina.

She is on the Executive Committee and the Board of Advisors of the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce, and is on the boards of EngenuitySC and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation - Palmetto Chapter.

Located in Columbia, DP Professionals, Inc. is a member of the Better Business Bureau, the South Carolina and Greater Columbia Chambers of Commerce, as well as the South Carolina Association of Personnel Services (SCAPS). DP Professionals, Inc. has been certified as a women-owned business by the South Carolina Governor's Office and by the National Women Business Owners Corporation.

She has been a resident of Columbia, South Carolina, since 1976. Her husband, Roger A. Blau, Ph.D., is Vice President of the company.