

BMO Celebrating Women: BMO Recognizes Outstanding Women in Vancouver through National Program

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- Awards announced from the 2019 Women Deliver Conference in Vancouver
- BMO is the first Financial Services company to sponsor the conference

VANCOUVER, June 5, 2019 /CNW/ - The BMO Celebrating Women Vancouver awards ceremony – an official side event of the Women Deliver Conference – honoured four women for their remarkable contributions to business and local communities. The Women Deliver Conference hosted over 6,000 government officials, academics, activists, journalists and private sector leaders from more than 160 countries to discuss solutions to advance gender equality in sectors including education, political participation, economic empowerment, healthcare and reproductive rights.

BMO Celebrating Women recognizes female leaders as part of the bank's commitment to drive the advancement of women by highlighting contributions in one of three categories: Trailblazers & Innovators; Community & Charitable Giving; and Expansion & Growth in Business.

The following honourees were recognized:

Trailblazers & Innovators: Andrée St-Germain. As Chief Financial Officer of Integra Resources Corporation and Director of Bakerville Gold Mines and Ascot Resources, Ms. St-Germain is an experienced mining finance executive with an extensive background in banking and financial management. Starting her career in investment banking for Dundee Capital Markets Inc., Ms. St-Germain worked exclusively with mining companies on mergers and acquisitions advisory and financing. In 2013, she joined Golden Queen Mining Co. Ltd. as the Chief Financial Officer and was instrumental in securing the project's finance and overseeing Golden Queen in its transition from development and construction to commercial production. She later joined Integra Gold in 2017, overseeing the \$590 million sale to Eldorado Gold Corporation that year. A trailblazing leader in her industry, Ms. St-Germain was awarded the 2018 Eira Thomas Young Mining Professional Award by the Canadian Mining Journal for her exceptional leadership and innovative thinking.

Trailblazers & Innovators: Barbara Mowat. Dedicated to the advancement of women in business, Ms. Mowat is an international leader in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), using her extensive network to promote entrepreneurship, business development and growth on several continents, including North America, Europe, South America, and Africa. Ms. Mowat serves as president of GroYourBiz and Impact Communications Ltd., a multi-faceted consulting company providing management training and consulting services alongside international product, business and market development for the global marketplace. GroYourBiz also provides monthly advisory boards to women entrepreneurs who want to take their business to the next level. She also created Uniquely Programs, which has helped over 12,000 Canadian entrepreneurs access increased markets. Ms. Mowat has also created and owned a national magazine, retail store and an e-commerce website supporting small, home-based businesses.

Community & Charitable Giving: Shelina Mawani. Immigrating to Canada in 1983, Ms. Mawani's journey inspired the co-founding of Nana's Kitchen and Hot Sauce Ltd., producing ready-to-eat items for food service and grocery retail customers across North America since 2000. The company currently employs 60 diverse staff and personnel. Several of the original restaurant staff progressed into management roles in the company's production facility. Ms. Mawani's company offers new immigrants - specifically women - with opportunities to gain financial independence and learn ways to contribute to their new country. Passionate about giving back to local and global communities, Ms. Mawani is a proud supporter of the B.C. Children's Hospital and has participated in the World Partnership Walk to raise funds towards ending world poverty. Since 1970, Ms. Mawani and her co-founder have contributed to the SOS Children's Village in northern Africa.

Expansion & Growth in Business: Véronique Lecault. An entrepreneur, scientist and engineer, she enjoys working at the interface of business, technology and biology to deliver improved therapies to patients. She co-founded AbCellera, a Canadian biotechnology company focused on the discovery of therapeutic antibodies from natural immune repertoires. Engaged in partnerships to develop next-generation antibodies, AbCellera recently announced its collaboration with global healthcare company Novartis. Earlier this year, AbCellera signed an agreement with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to fight infectious disease and accelerate global health research. In 2017, AbCellera won the LifeSciences BC Growth Stage Company of the Year Award.

"Our innovative honourees have shown that hard work and passion can deliver creative solutions and progress in any industry and sector," said Jennifer Muench, Regional President (B.C.), BMO Private Wealth. "We are thrilled to recognize these women through this important initiative and are committed to developing and furthering programs that support the advancement of women across British Columbia and in communities nationwide."

The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, was also in attendance at last night's event to highlight the importance of supporting women-led businesses and community leaders.

"Women remain underrepresented in our economy. In fact, only 16 per cent of Canadian businesses are women-owned. Studies show that advancing gender equality could add up to \$150 billion to our economy in just a few years," said Minister Ng. "We all have a responsibility to support women because when women succeed, we all succeed. I commend BMO for celebrating and honouring women's commitments in business, innovation and society and congratulate the remarkable honourees for their impressive contributions."

BMO has developed products to address the needs of its female clients, including the recent Women in Leadership Mutual Fund – the first impact-investing mutual fund focused on gender diversity to be offered by a Canadian bank. In April 2019, CEO Darryl White signed the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) on behalf of the bank, making BMO the first Canadian financial institution to sign the WEPs.

The Women Deliver Conference is the world's largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women. On June 3, Joanna Rotenberg, Group Head of BMO Wealth Management spoke on a panel titled *Taking Action Supporting Women in the Future Workplace*, and on June 4, Mike Bonner, BMO's Regional President, B.C. & Yukon, delivered a presentation on *Women's Access to Capital*. In the lead-up to the Women Deliver Conference, BMO and the federal department for Women and Gender Equality Canada [announced](#) a partnership to provide women's organizations training on strategic and financial planning.

For more information about BMO Celebrating Women, please visit bmoformen.com and join the social conversation using #BMOforWomen.

About BMO for Women

BMO is committed to supporting initiatives that empower women within its workforce and the communities the bank serves. BMO has partnered with organizations such as the Women's Presidents Organization, GroYourBiz, #movethedial, and Women Get On Board to provide expertise, leadership, knowledge, and opportunities for women to network and learn. In 2018, BMO announced it is making \$3 billion in capital available over the next three years for Canadian businesses owned by women. Through the only bank-owned recognition program for women in North America – BMO Celebrating Women – BMO celebrates successful women who have given back to their communities or achieved success in business. Since 2012, BMO Celebrating Women has honoured more than 100 women in communities across Canada and the United States.

SOURCE BMO Financial Group

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