

## **BMO Recognizes Women's Contributions to Small Business and Community in Edmonton**

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EDMONTON, June 14, 2017 /CNW/ - Four women were honoured through the annual BMO Celebrating Women program in Edmonton in two categories: Community and Charitable Giving and Expansion and Growth in Small Business. The program recognizes female leaders in local communities as part of BMO's commitment to drive the advancement of women.

At the Edmonton event, the following honourees were recognized:

- Community and Charitable Giving: **Glori Meldrum**. Ms. Meldrum is the CEO of g[squared], an Edmonton-based marketing agency. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, Ms. Meldrum focuses on preventing it and lending a hand to those victims with trauma. In 2008, she founded Little Warriors, a national organization that educates on child sexual abuse. In 2014, she created the Be Brave Ranch, Canada's first long-term treatment centre for child victims.
- Expansion and Growth in Small Business: **Pattie Ganske**. Ms. Ganske is the former co-owner and general manager of Parkland Fertilizers (Wetaskiwin) Ltd., a locally-owned retailer that provides crop inputs. She was one of the first women in Western Canada to be an independent owner of a business of this nature. Ms. Ganske educates the agriculture chain – from producer to consumer – through her work in the community.
- Expansion and Growth in Small Business: **Romonda Kuntz**. Ms. Kuntz is the President of On Track – Kuntz & Company Inc., which provides cost-effective solutions for diesel engines and trucks. This year, she and her husband are marking their 20<sup>th</sup> year of operations. Despite economic challenges in the region, the company has grown its revenue consistently since 2014 and continues to expand.
- Expansion and Growth in Small Business: **Marie Soprovich**. Ms. Soprovich is the owner and CEO of Aquarian Renovations, a company that renovates and designs custom homes. She began the company with her husband in 1991. After he passed in 2011, Ms. Soprovich re-organized the structure and positioned it as a premier renovator in Edmonton.

"Each of these women have persevered and excelled in a way that's inspiring to others in the community," said Susan Brown, Senior Vice President, Alberta and Northwest Territories Division, BMO Bank of Montreal. "We're proud to honour them for their work, and support an initiative that serves as a platform to tell their stories."

The BMO Celebrating Women program follows the bank's second Catalyst Award win for its industry-leading work to accelerate diversity and inclusion in its workplace and dedication to gender equality.

In addition, BMO has partnerships with organizations such as GroYourBiz, WBE Canada, Women Presidents' Organization, SheEO and Catalyst. It has also developed products that address the needs of its female clients, including the recent Women in Leadership Mutual Fund – the first impact investing mutual fund offered by a Canadian bank focused on gender diversity – and spearheaded studies around women entrepreneurs, such as *A Force to Reckon With: Women, Entrepreneurs & Risk* – an eye-opening report in partnership with Carleton University that debunked myths around the notion of women being risk averse.

For more information about BMO Celebrating Women, please visit: [bmoforwomen.com](http://bmoforwomen.com) and join the social conversation using #BMOforWomen.

### **About BMO Financial Group**

Established in 1817, and currently marking its 200th year of operations, BMO Financial Group is a highly diversified financial services provider based in North America. With total assets of \$719 billion as of April 30, 2017, and more than 45,000 employees, BMO provides a broad range of personal and commercial banking, wealth management and investment banking products and services to more than 12 million customers and conducts business through three operating groups: Personal and Commercial Banking, Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

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