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Greater Houston LGBT Chamber Celebrates Pride In Business and Launches 2021 Pride In Business Awards

Celebrating the important role of LGBTQ+ and Allied Business Community

HOUSTON, TX (June 24, 2021) – The Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce held its signature event, Pride In Business, with Presenting Sponsor, British Consulate General-Houston, on June 24, 2021 to celebrate Pride Month and the Chamber’s five year anniversary as well as launch the Pride In Business Awards. The event, which is held annually during Pride Month, is a unique opportunity to celebrate the important role of LGBTQ+ and Allied businesses in the Greater Houston economy. The event underscores how the LGBTQ+ & Allied Business Community works with the broader business community and public officials to realize a better Houston.

The Pride In Business event was emceed by Melanie Lawson, Anchor with ABC13. The event included a “fireside chat” with keynote speaker, Louis A. Vega, President, North America, Vice President, Government Affairs and Advocacy, North America for Dow. Other special guests included Mayor Sylvester Turner, Mayor of the City of Houston, and Justin Nelson, Founder and President of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). The virtual event included the launch of the Pride In Business Awards.

Pride In Business Awards recognizes the contributions made by Chamber members, Corporate Partners and other key stakeholders in building a more diverse and inclusive business community in Houston and the region. The awards spotlight deserving companies and individuals and showcase the amazing work they are doing to support the LGBTQ+ community.

“The Pride In Business Celebration is an opportunity to highlight the LGBTQ+ Business Community. The event is incredibly special this year as we celebrate Pride Month and the Chamber’s milestone five year anniversary as well as honor some amazing members and Mayor Turner for their advocacy, leadership and support,” said Tammi Wallace, Co-Founder, President & CEO. “Congratulations to our 2021 Pride In Business Honorees. These deserving individuals and organizations are tremendous champions of the Chamber, its mission focused on economic inclusion and the LGBTQ community. During Pride Month, the Chamber is proud to honor each one of them for their incredible contributions.”

The honorees included Mayor Sylvester Turner, who received the Chamber Champion Award for his advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ+ owned businesses.

"I am honored to receive the first ever LGBTQ Chamber Champion Award," said Mayor Sylvester Turner. "I am humbled especially given how many other Houstonians have made contributions in this quest for equality."

The 2021 Pride In Business Honorees include:

Chamber Champion Award: Mayor Sylvester Turner

This award is given to a person who is a strong advocate for the Chamber and the LGBTQ+ & Allied business community. Through their work and impact, this person advances business prosperity for LGBTQ+ & Allied businesses especially BIPOC, trans and women owned businesses. The Chamber is proud to recognize Mayor Sylvester Turner as the 2021 Chamber Champion Award for his historic executive order to include LGBTBE® Certified businesses in City of Houston contracting and procurement, making Houston the first city in Texas to include this recognition. In addition, this award recognizes Mayor Turner's outstanding leadership and advocacy on behalf of the LGBTQ+ business community and the entire community.

Corporate Partner of the Year: Comcast

The Corporate Partner of the Year Award is given to a company that has shown a strong commitment to positively growing the LGBTQ+ business community. This year, the Chamber is proud to recognize Chamber inaugural Corporate Partner, Comcast, as the 2021 Pride In Business Corporate Partner of the Year. Comcast is being recognized for its commitment to the Chamber and for being a strong advocate its mission to advance economic inclusion including through the Comcast RISE program, which has helped thousands of diverse owned businesses with grants and technical support.

Corporate LGBTQ Ally of the Year: George Marshall, Amegy Bank

This award is given to an individual who has a positive impact within their company as a champion for LGBTQ+ inclusion. This year, the Chamber is proud to recognize, George Marshall, who is with Chamber inaugural Corporate Partner, Amegy Bank, as the 2021 Pride In Business Corporate Ally of the Year. George advocated for Amegy Bank to be the very first Chamber Corporate Partner and support the Chamber's mission focused on economic inclusion. The Chamber recognizes his commitment both as an Executive Sponsor of the LGBT and Allies Business Resource Group and as a champion for the broader LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ Business of the Year: MarFran Cleaning LLC

This award is given to an LGBTQ+-owned member business that is an active participant and champion of the Chamber with a proven track record of success and it serves as a strong example for other Chamber members. The Chamber is proud to recognize inaugural member, MarFran Cleaning as the LGBTQ Business of the Year. MarFran Cleaning is one of the Chamber's very first members supporting the organization since year one. As a LGBTQ-, BIPOC-, women- and veteran-owned business, the company continually serves a strong role model for diverse owned businesses.

LGBTBE® Certified Business of the Year: Bocci Engineering & Construction

This award is given to an LGBTBE® Certified Member Business that has a proven track record of success utilizing the certification and they serve as a strong example for other Chamber members in terms of business success. The Chamber is proud to recognize Founding Member, Bocci Engineering and Construction, on being recognized as the 2021 Pride In Business LGBTBE® Certified Business of the Year! Bocci is continuously giving back to the to the LGBTQ+ Business Community both as a role model and sharing insights, best practices and wisdom to support other business owners.

Allied Business of the Year: Ajana Therapy & Clinical Services

Allies play a pivotal role in the Chamber. We are proud to honor an Allied-owned business with the Pride In Business Allied Business of the Year Award which recognizes its commitment to LGBTQ inclusion through its work, actions and visible support of the community. This business has a proven track record of success and involvement and is a strong champion of the Chamber and the LGBTQ+ community. At the start of the pandemic, the team at Ajana Therapy & Clinical Services was one of the first members to step up to offer support for the Chamber and its members. The Chamber is proud to recognize Ajana Therapy & Clinical Services on being recognized as the 2021 Allied Business of the Year.

Nonprofit Member of the Year: Combined Arms

This award is given to a nonprofit member that is committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion through its work, actions and visible support of the community. The organization has a proven track record of success and involvement with the LGBTQ+ community and is a strong champion of the Chamber's mission to accelerate economic opportunity for the LGBTQ+ community. The Chamber is proud to recognize Combined Arms as the 2021 Pride In Business Nonprofit Member of the Year and recognize the organizations work and advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ+ Veterans.

Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year: Brian Hall, Shell

This award is given to an individual who works in supplier diversity or procurement and has been a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion within the larger business community. The Chamber is proud to recognize Brian Hall as the 2021 Pride In Business Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year. Brian has championed the Chamber's mission of economic inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community through his role at Shell focused on supplier diversity. His mentorship and engagement with LGBTQ+ business owners has enriched many members (and beyond!) because of his willingness to generously share his unique and valuable insight to help them succeed. Brian is a connector, a leader and a change maker.

Business Resource Group of the Year: Dow - GLAD

This award is given to a Chamber Corporate Partner employee resource group that works to support and build a culture of inclusion and acceptance. The group is a strong advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion within the company and beyond. The Chamber is proud to recognize

Corporate Partner, Dow and its LGBTQ Employee Resource Group GLAD, with the 2021 Pride In Business Business Resource Group of the Year Award. GLAD serves as a model for other groups advocating for change within companies and supporting LGBTQ employees to bring their full and authentic selves to the workplace. Dow's LGBTQ Employee Resource Group leads from the front, within the company and beyond, to support the broader LGBTQ community through advocacy and engagement through public policy and more. GLAD, the chemical industry's first LGBTQ+ employee resource group, was formed more than 15 years ago, to improve LGBTQ+ workplace equality.

Chamber Advocacy Award: United

This award is given to an organization that is a strong advocate for the Chamber and the LGBTQ+ & Allied business community. Through its work and impact, this organization advances business prosperity for LGBTQ+ & Allied businesses especially BIPOC, trans and women owned businesses. The Chamber is proud to recognize Silver Level Corporate Partner, United, with the 2021 Pride In Business Chamber Advocacy Award. The Chamber applauds United for its advocacy and leadership on LGBTQ+ legislation at the local, state and federal levels as well as the commitment to supplier diversity and LGBTBE® Certified Businesses and local, statewide and national LGBTQ+ chamber engagement

Community Legacy Award: OutSmart Magazine

This award honors an individual or organization that has demonstrated a long-term commitment to the LGBTQ+ community. Through the actions of advocacy, service, education or community initiatives, they have made a significant and positive impact for the LGBTQ+ community. The Chamber is proud to recognize Founding Member, OutSmart Magazine, with the inaugural Pride In Business Community Legacy Award. Celebrating its milestone anniversary this year, for 25 years, OutSmart Magazine has shared the stories of the LGBTQ+ community and preserved a record of its history for Houston, the region and beyond. Because of OutSmart Magazine, generations to come will have access to some of the most important historical moments in LGBTQ+ history.

About the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce

Established in February 2016, the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce's mission is to accelerate economic opportunity for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer + (LGBTQ+) business community through a strong network of business allies, innovative programs, strategic partnerships and advance policies that foster economic inclusion and equality.

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