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2009 INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Cleveland, OH—Three award recipients, recognized for their outstanding contributions to The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) and their strong commitment to advancing women in international trade and business, were announced today at the Fall Board Meeting in Cleveland, Ohio.

OWIT presented its *2009 Woman of the Year Award* to **Joanne Mwangi**, OWIT Nairobi's former Vice Chairperson. Passionate about enhancing the active participation and inclusion of women in policy making positions, Joanne is tireless in her efforts to ensure an enabling business environment and reduce the gender disparity that is rife in Kenya, Africa and beyond. She is an innovative entrepreneur who has been able to grow a business in a male dominated field - Professional Marketing Services Limited, Kenya's leading experiential marketing agency. She is also the newly appointed chair of the Federation of Women Associations (FEWA), an organization that brings together women entrepreneurs and association members across Kenya and helps them gain access to international markets and trade affairs. A milestone of her work with FEWA is the creation of a co-op that enables women in business to save money that they can borrow later at lower rates than banks provide. And, through her leadership, Mwangi has played a pivotal leadership role in OWIT Nairobi, officially putting OWIT on the map in Kenya. "This incredible award has energized me," says Mwangi. "My achievements are still 'works in progress'. I have confidence that together, as a global network of like-minded women in business, we can achieve so much more at a personal and corporate level. I am further gratified that my effort and commitment, alongside others, have been recognized and I wish to share this award with my fellow Kenyan women who are holding our economy and families up in these harsh times."

OWIT's **Toronto Chapter** was awarded the *Chapter of the Year Award* for its position of leadership within OWIT in helping further the OWIT mission, for sharing best practices, and for successfully fostering education and networking opportunities among global trade professionals. With some of its members taking key roles on OWIT's Executive International Board, the Toronto Chapter spearheaded a women's trade mission to Monterrey, Mexico, that was held in conjunction with OWIT's 2008 Annual World Conference and that opened the door to excellent business and government contacts for participants. In addition, with little lead-time, the Toronto Chapter was also able to step in and arrange a well organized Spring Board Meeting.

OWIT's *Member of the Year Award* was presented to **Kollyn Kanz**, tireless OWIT champion at both the local and international levels for the last 16 years. Kanz became actively involved with the New York and Atlanta Chapters of OWIT from 1994-1998 before becoming involved with WIT-LA, where she has held various positions including Treasurer, Vice President, President, and Chairman of the Board. In 2007, she was asked to join OWIT's Executive Committee and take the position of Treasurer, where she established best practices, ensured transparency and accountability, and provided templates and guidelines to support the Monterrey Chapter for the 2008 conference. Today, Kanz continues to be a major pillar and active leader in the organization, ensuring WIT-LA continues to be highly respected in the Southern California International Trade arena.

About OWIT

The Organization of Women in International Trade (www.owit.org) is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing global trade opportunities for women by providing networking and educational opportunities. It has over 20 chapters worldwide.

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