



# 2018 Small Business Alliance Year in Review

BY ROBERT S. SMITH, CPA, SANTORA CPA GROUP, CO-CHAIR

THE SMALL BUSINESS ALLIANCE (SBA) had a busy year in 2018 with enhancing its advocacy focus, highlighting small business achievers, expanding its offerings to small businesses, and increasing its membership. It was a special year, marking the 20th anniversary of SBA's hallmark recognition program, Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business.

In early 2018, many changes were made within the SBA. We admitted four additional members, strengthening our diversity, for a total of 16 representatives from Delaware's small business and nonprofit community, supplemented by an 11-member advisory council from larger employers and government agencies. James DeChene, the Chamber's Senior VP of Government Relations, was appointed to lead the committee along with co-chairs Mike Vanderslice and me. This allowed for a more focused approach to our legislative advocacy efforts. We also arranged free membership in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to over 700 small business Chamber members.

On May 10, the SBA hosted its 4th Annual Small Business Day in Dover. The event was held in Legislative Hall in Dover for over 50 small

business representatives in attendance. We began with a panel discussion by lobbyists Kim Willson of Ruggerio Wilson, Rick Deadwyler of Corteva Agriscience™, Lincoln Willis of the Willis Group and Kim Gomes of the Byrd Group. They provided essential advice on gaining the attention of and communicating effectively with legislators.

The monthly House Small Business Caucus meeting followed, which includes General Assembly members who are small business owners or actively represent their interests. The SBA addressed the Chamber's positions on key topics including Minimum Wage (SB170), Sexual Harassment (HB360), Marijuana Control Act (HB110), and Long-Term Budget Sustainability. Attendees were able to meet directly with their legislators, which was arranged by the Chamber.

The SBA continued its advocacy efforts in the summer months on the above topics, plus the WARN Act (HB409), predictive scheduling, and next year's state budget. We also increased our focus on communications with other chambers to find common ground on issues affecting all members statewide.



Finally, the SBA presented its milestone event, the 20th annual Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business awards program, held on November 7, in the Hotel DuPont's Gold Ballroom. This year's keynote speaker was Scott Kammerer, President of SoDel Concepts, who told his compelling story of SoDel's amazing success over the past 20 years.

This year's Superstars in Business winners include: Promo Victory (1-24 employees), Cover & Rossiter (25-59 employees), Kuehne Company (60-150 employees), and Delaware Humane Association (nonprofit). Award of



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Excellence recipients include: Holmes Smith Consulting Services, Inc. (1-24 employees), Ferris Home Improvements (25-59 employees), Home Instead Senior Care (60-150 employees), and Exceptional Care for Children (nonprofit). The Gilman Bowl was awarded to Martha Gilman in a very special surprise presentation.

The SBA plans to continue its strong advocacy efforts in 2019. In addition to the continued Chamber leadership of James

DeChene, the SBA will be led by returning co-chair Mike Vanderslice of Environmental Alliance and Joe Nadel of Colonial Parking. ■

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## How it all started...

1995 was a pivotal year for the Delaware State Chamber. A former small business owner himself, John Burris appointed a group of representatives to come together as a Steering/Ad Hoc Committee on small business services, assess the climate for this segment of membership and recommend a strategy to update the Chamber's focus on its 2,800 small business members. The result was the creation of the Small Business Alliance and a recommendation to create a new signature event.



**“Small businesses form the backbone of our economy, yet it is very difficult for them to have influence as individuals... As a [large] group of employers, however, they can speak with a very strong voice.”** - John M. Burris, former DSCC president

“At the time, we had some very aggressive, successful membership programs. If memory serves, we were one of the most successful chambers in the country in terms of membership by total population. An overwhelming number of these were small businesses, but there was not a mechanism within the chamber to represent these folks.” - Mike Uffner, president, chairman and CEO of Delaware Cadillac, Subaru & Kia of Wilmington and Chevrolet of Dover

**Three years later, in 1998, the curtains were raised for the Superstars in Business awards program.**



Article from 1996 Annual Report  
issue of Delaware Business magazine



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“The longevity of this program really is an honor. The program has a strong base of people who believe in the Superstars message, and still do after 20 years – it’s evident each year when you attend the awards luncheon. It’s so special because the business community is recognizing the work of other businesses.”

- Martha S. Gilman, Gilman Development Company

“It’s important to tell and discover the good stories of businesses going above and beyond daily operations and expectations. I think the up and coming generation will be inspired by their predecessors.”

- Brett G. Smith, Gilman Development Company



## Marvin S. Gilman, 1922-1998

The Marvin S. Gilman Bowl was established by the Small Business Alliance of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce in 2008 – in celebration of the program’s 10 year anniversary – to honor an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Delaware’s small business and nonprofit organizations. The honoree’s name is held in confidence until the awards luncheon.

### Honorees:

2008	Albert R. Morris	2014	Julian H. “Pete” Booker
2009	Barry A. Crozier	2015	Richard G. “Dick” Hatfield
2010	The Levin Family	2016	Frank and Donna Masley
2011	Michael S. Uffner	2017	Peter C. Morrow
2012	Fred C. Sears II	2018	Martha S. Gilman
2013	Donald T. Fulton		

In celebration of the 20th anniversary, the program recognized Martha S. Gilman with the prestigious award named in honor of her father – the Marvin S. Gilman Bowl – who served as an exemplary leader and a paragon of small business and philanthropy in Delaware. A member of the committee who reviews the Gilman Bowl nominations each year, it was a big but important task to make sure she would be surprised. Martha not only continues his legacy through her philanthropic work but she also exemplifies what this award represents.



# 20 YEARS OF SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS

## We are proud of this list of winners:

Aloysius Butler & Clark  
American Cancer Society  
Artesian Water Company  
AutoTeam Delaware  
The Archer Group  
B+H Insurance, LLC (BHI)  
Back to Basics Learning Dynamics, Inc.  
Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, CPAs  
Bernardon  
Blood Bank of Delmarva  
Blooming Boutique  
Boulden Brothers  
The Boys & Girls Club of Delaware  
Breakthrough Communication Group  
Brennan's Office Interiors  
BrightFields, Inc.  
Buck Simperts Architect + Assoc. (BSA+A)  
Cancer Support Community Delaware  
Catholic Charities, Inc.  
Community Bank Delaware  
Community Service Building Corp.  
Corexcel - **2x winner!**  
CorpAmerica  
Cover & Rossiter - **2x winner!**  
Delaware Design Company  
Delaware Diamond Knives, Inc.  
Delaware Hospice  
Delaware Humane Association  
Delmarva Broadcasting Company  
DiSabatino Construction Company  
Dogfish Head Craft Brewery  
Duffield Associates, Inc.  
Dukart Management Corporation  
EDiS Company - **3x winner!**  
Emory Hill Companies  
Environmental Alliance, Inc.  
Food Bank of Delaware  
George & Lynch, Inc.  
Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay  
Goeins-Williams Associates  
The Grand Opera House  
Habitat for Humanity New Castle County  
Healy, Long & Jevin, Inc.  
Home Instead Senior Care  
i.g. Burton & Company, Inc.  
Karins and Associates  
Kuehne Company  
La Red Health Center  
Landmark Science & Engineering, Inc.  
Latin American Community Center  
Laura Novak Photography & Little Nest Portraits  
Lyons Companies  
Magpage  
McBride Shopa & Company, P.A.  
Metro Merchant Services  
milliCare by EBC  
Ministry of Caring, Inc.  
MySherpa  
Parcels, Inc.  
Promo Victory  
Precision Air Convey Corporation  
Ronald McDonald House of Delaware  
Sir Speedy Printing of Newark  
Special Olympics Delaware  
SoDel Concepts  
St. Patrick's Center  
Sunday Breakfast Mission  
SSD Technology Partners - **2x winner!**  
Star BIDCO  
TekSolv  
Trellist Marketing & Technology  
Trinity Logistics  
United Electric Supply  
Unique Impressions  
Westside Health, Inc.  
Wheeler, Wolfenden & Dwares, CPAs

# WHAT IT MEANS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## TO BE A SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS



“It was a great honor for SSD Technology Partners to be recognized by local business leaders as one of Delaware’s Superstars in Business in 2005 and 2010. The recognition gave our employees a great morale boost and sense of pride as we continue to do what is right for our clients. It also brought us one of our largest clients to date through the many avenues of promotion the State Chamber provides to all recipients.”  
– Lisa Detwiler, President, SSD Technology Partners, 2005 and 2010 Superstar in Business

“The Superstars in Business award was meaningful to us because it comes from our peers. The Delaware community is important to us, and it was extremely gratifying to be recognized by those we most respect.” – Brian DiSabatino, CEO, EDiS Company, 2016, 2011 and 1998 Superstar in Business



“St. Patrick’s Center is proud to be included on the prestigious list of Superstars in Business Award winners! The recognition we received last year, including the video, business magazine, and luncheon, helped us market our work to the business community and led to important contacts and increased donations. Many thanks to the Chamber and its members for recognizing and supporting St. Patrick’s Center!”  
– Joe Hickey, Executive Director (retired), St. Patrick’s Center, 2014 Superstar in Business

“It is difficult for me to express what receiving the Superstars in Business Award meant to me personally, to our company and the dedicated team that we have. We received the award while working through a very difficult time for our company. It gave us something positive to focus on, and helped us gain the confidence to continue to grow and become a leader in the business community in Sussex County. We are grateful for the recognition from the State Chamber, it helps legitimize our company and all of the great companies in Sussex County that work so hard to make the economy here better.”  
– Scott Kammerer, President, SoDel Concepts, 2015 Superstar in Business



“MySherpa applied for the Superstars Award because it gave us an invaluable opportunity to be recognized as the best by our peers on a statewide level. Everyone loves the story of successful local companies who give back and share their success with the community, and Delaware has many to be proud of. We are very fortunate to be part of this story and are grateful for everyone that has helped us along the way.”  
– Greg Gurev, President, MySherpa, 2014 Superstar in Business

“Being named a Superstar in Business was a great honor. We applied for the award because we wanted our company to be recognized as a leader in our industry who does business the right way in an industry that typically doesn’t have a healthy reputation. We put our customers first and we have a fantastic team who deserved to be recognized. We promote our award on all our marketing literature, which has given us credibility.”  
– Mark Landis, President, Metro Merchant Services, 2016 Superstar in Business





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“From the beginning, the Small Business Alliance envisioned the Superstars in Business event as a celebration of small business excellence. In our company, striving for excellence is an acknowledged business objective. Associate engagement towards our objectives is an essential ingredient in accomplishment, so tangible awards play an important role in motivating our associates to achieve excellence. Being a Superstar winner has helped us grow our business and achieve our business objectives. Plus the publicity that comes along with being a winner has tremendous value, both internally and externally. I would encourage all businesses to try to earn this recognition.”

– Michael S. Uffner, President, Chairman & CEO, AutoTeam Delaware, 2003 Superstar in Business



“Applying for the award two years in a row (we also won the 2011 Award of Excellence) meant taking a good, hard look at our company to review its strengths and weaknesses, ways we could improve, and strategies we could implement to become a stronger business. The prestige, accolades and recognition were wonderful, but most of all, we became a better company because of the process we went through in striving to win the award. In addition, the pride the staff felt in winning pulled us together even further as a team, boosted morale, and raised us up in the eyes of our clients and prospective clients.”

– Carmen J. Facciolo, Jr., Partner, Emory Hill, 2012 Superstar in Business



“Being the recipient of the Superstars in Business award was truly the highest honor. The State Chamber takes the application process very seriously, and treats its winners like gold. One of the surprises for us was realizing for the first time that the business model we’ve built over the years could be recognized by others as exceptional in some way. The take-away was an added measure of confidence that potential clients had in us that we would take exceptional care of them. You can’t put a price on peace of mind, and the Superstars award certainly provided that extra measure. We’re still amazed and honored.”

– Donna O’Delle Hoke, Owner, Unique Impressions, 2013 Superstar in Business



“We won the Award of Excellence the first year we applied and then committed to using our company growth and improvements to apply again a few years later in 2000 when we were named a Superstar. The award still inspires us to recognize that the ideal of small incremental improvements by motivated, experienced and loyal associates is a competitive weapon for a small business that wants to grow!”

– Chip Rankin, President, MilliCare by EBC, 2000 Superstar in Business



“We opened as a start-up in 2003 and six years later were selected as a Superstar winner. This recognition was most gratifying given our hard earned success. It also likely helped propel our continued growth, more than doubling in size since the award. We now employ nearly 300 full and part-time staff.”

– Bob Bird, Owner, Home Instead Senior Care, 2009 Superstar in Business



# WHAT IT MEANS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## TO BE A SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS



“Cover & Rossiter was honored to be named by the State Chamber of Commerce as one of the Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business. I believe our team was inspired even more by this award to achieve our goals of being client focused and future ready. The recognition as a Superstar in Business helps us to let others know that our accounting firm has great people, providing great advice to the Delaware community.”  
– Marie Holliday, Managing Director, Cover & Rossiter, 2012 & 2018 Superstar in Business

“It was an honor to be recognized by the State Chamber for the health care services we provide as a nonprofit organization serving Sussex County, and it is very humbling to be among the past and current honorees of this prestigious award. Recognition through this award has created additional exposure for La Red Health Center within the business community, which we hope will lead to additional partnerships to help reach the under-served populations within Sussex County.”  
- Brian Olson, Chief Executive Officer, La Red Health Center, 2017 Superstar in Business



“Being recognized by the business community in our state for excellence was very humbling and gratifying. Being a Superstar among the many great nonprofits has continued to challenge us to perform at an increasingly higher level.”  
– Rev. Tom Laymon, President & CEO, Sunday Breakfast Mission, 2013 Superstar in Business

“Simply being recognized by the DSCC as one of the top businesses in our state is truly an honor. To be noticed for our work with clients and within our community serves to validate the strength of our vision and the exceptional efforts of our entire team. We value what being a Superstar stands for and are very thankful to be a part of such a diverse group of excellent organizations.”  
– Michael T. French, CPA, Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, CPAs, 2005 Superstar in Business



“Being recognized as a Superstar in Business gave Catholic Charities the acknowledgment from our community of being a successful nonprofit, and demonstrated that our strategic adoption of sound business practices maintained the agency’s legacy of caring service. We have been able to leverage that recognition in subsequent grant and contract applications as a ‘badge of honor’ from our community. We also use our Superstar in Business selection as an introduction to businesses that could be potential partners in service with Catholic Charities.  
- Richelle Vible, Executive Director, Catholic Charities, 2009 Superstar in Business



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**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS  
AWARDS LUNCHEON

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“Our firm was honored to receive the Superstars in Business Award in 2006. At the time of the award, John Wheeler and I had spent eight years of hard work building a public accounting practice from the ground up. The accolades provided by the Superstars Award served as validation of our team’s success and increased our growing firm’s profile in the Delaware business community. We believe the award helped solidify our position as a leader in the local accounting industry in the minds of current and prospective clients. Since then, our firm has continued its forward momentum and growth. In 2018, we are proud to celebrate 20 years in business.” – Dave Wolfenden, CPA, CVA, MS, Managing Director, Wheeler Wolfenden and Dwares, CPAs, 2006 Superstar in Business



“As President of Environmental Alliance, Inc., I was pleased to accept with great pride the Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Award for 2011. For companies in Delaware, this is truly an honor that cannot be understated. This award is particularly exciting as it recognizes the culture and support network we have created for our associates and our clients. It is a credit to all of our associates’ hard work and effort to help make Alliance a fantastic company, and a true Superstar in Business.”

– Bill Smith, President, Environmental Alliance, Inc., 2011 Superstar in Business



“Being honored with the Superstars in Business award has been a great affirmation of business excellence and has yielded innumerable benefits for TekSolv. First and foremost, it’s been a profound source of pride and motivation for our company and teams. The award acknowledges our hard-working staff and their diligent commitment to our business success and continued growth.”

– John Mouser, President, TekSolv, Inc., 2014 Superstar in Business



## **The 20th Annual Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Awards Luncheon occurred on November 7, 2018**

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

Scott Kammerer  
President, SoDel Concepts



"Building something from nothing isn't for everyone, but I wouldn't trade it for anything," said Kammerer in sharing the story behind SoDel's inception, challenges overcome, accomplishments made and the success yet to be had...

# 20<sup>TH</sup> Annual Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Awards



The Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Alliance and Superstars in Business planning committee appreciate the support and generosity of the following sponsors:

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