



Presenting the 2008 SBA Small Business Award Winners!



Small Business Person of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Beverly Gannon
Hali'imaile General Store and Nene Grill dba Joe's Bar



Minority Small Business Champion of the Year

State, Region IX & National

Johnson W. K. Choi
Hong Kong.China.Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce

Small Business Exporter

State of Hawai'i & Region IX

David Fell & Sandy Kasman
Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery

Financial Services Champion

State of Hawai'i & Region IX

Bill Spencer
Hawai'i Venture Capital Association

Small Business Journalist

State of Hawai'i & Region IX

Pamela Tumpap
Maui Chamber of Commerce

SBA Young Entrepreneur

State of Hawai'i

Tom Park
Leather Soul

SBA Family-Owned Business

State of Hawai'i

Jonathan Ota
Tip Top Café & Bakery

Women in Business Champion

State of Hawai'i

Joann Seery
BNI International & Referral Institute

Entrepreneurial Success

State of Hawai'i

Rex Matsuno
Suisan Company, Ltd.

Small Business Person

City & County of Honolulu
Robert Iopa, Lawrence Cunha, Mark Higa & Daniel Kanekuni
WCIT Architecture

Small Business Person

County of Hawai'i
John & Donna Rozett
Rozett's Nursery

Small Business Person

County of Kaua'i
Mary Valenzuela
Ink Spot Printing Corporation

Entrepreneurial Success

County of Maui
Richard S. Ouye
Service Rentals & Supplies

SBA Family-Owned Business

County of Maui

Neil Hasegawa
Hasegawa General Store

SBA Family-Owned Business

County of Hawai'i

Michael Tokunaga
S. Tokunaga Store

SBA Family-Owned Business

City & County of Honolulu

Roy & Kathy Sakuma
Roy Sakuma Productions

Small Business Exporter

County of Kaua'i

Lori Cardenas
Aunty Liliko'i

Small Business Exporter

City & County of Honolulu

Alan Hornstein
Lenox Metals

SBA Young Entrepreneur

County of Maui

Brennan K. Purtzer
Hawai'i Pacific Media

SBA Young Entrepreneur

City & County of Honolulu

Kimberly Nakasato
Nakasato Contracting

Small Business Journalist

City & County of Honolulu

Erika Engle
Honolulu Star Bulletin

Women in Business Champion

County of Maui

Carolyn Kooy
Kilakila Employment Services

Women in Business Champion

County of Hawai'i

Roberta Chu
Bank of Hawaii

Women in Business Champion

City & County of Honolulu

Susan Utsugi
Central Pacific Bank

Small Business Journalist

County of Kaua'i

Joan Conrow
Kaua'i People

Financial Services Champion

County of Maui

Richard Kehoe
RJK, LLC & SCORE of Hawai'i

Financial Services Champion

County of Kaua'i

Diana M. V. Shaw
Hawai'i Small Business Development Center Network

Financial Services Champion

City & County of Honolulu

Diana Jackson
TradeX & SCORE of Hawai'i

Small Business Journalist

County of Maui

Sky Barnhart Schual
Skywrite Journalism

Minority Small Business Champion

County of Kaua'i

Ernesto "Ernie" G. Pasion
Tax Consulting & Preparation

SBA Administrator's Award of Excellence

Region IX Prime Contractor

Ernest Shih
Environmental Science International

SBA Administrator's Award of Excellence

Prime Contractor

David Leong
D& A Joint Venture

SBA Administrator's Award of Excellence

Sub Contractor

Severino Agbayani
Road Builders Corporation

2008 Small Business Person of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Beverly "Bev" Gannon
Hali'imaile General Store, Inc. and Nene Grill, Inc.



Beverly Gannon is the chef/owner of two of the most highly-regarded restaurants on Maui, the Hali'imaile General Store in upcountry Maui and Joe's in Wailea. Bev got her start in the food business with her catering company, Celebrations Catering. Aside from being voted as "Best Chef on Maui" by readers of the *Maui News* and *Maui Nō Ka 'O'i* magazine, Gannon is probably best known as one of the 12 original founders of Hawai'i Regional Cuisine with other celebrity chefs Alan Wong, Roy Yamaguchi, and Sam Choy, among others. Her skill and innovation in the kitchen have obviously transferred to her business management style as she oversees a growing culinary-based operation that reaches far beyond food preparation, into cookbooks and consulting. Gannon's first cookbook is now on its fifth printing and the second is due in spring 2009. She is the executive chef for Hawaiian Airlines, providing a delicious strategic advantage for the local airline on all mainland and international flights. Gannon attributes a great deal of the success and continued growth of her company to the dedication of her employees, many of whom are now "part of the family." *Nominated by Lolita Feliciano and Alvin Santander, Bank of Hawaii*

City and County of Honolulu

Robert Iopa, Lawrence Cunha, Jr., Daniel Kanekuni, and Mark Higa
WCIT Architecture, Inc.



Established in 2000, WCIT Architecture, Inc. is an internationally-recognized firm specializing in luxury resort, resort-residential, and spa design and development. In that relatively short eight-year term, they have become a leader among Hawai'i companies. The talents of the principals - Rob Iopa, Larry Cunha, Danny Kanekuni, and Mark Higa - have secured many long-term contracts worth millions of dollars with projects placed all across the globe. The staff now numbers 44 employees working in offices on O'ahu, Maui and in San Francisco. The unique and diverse skills of the current leadership are credited with guiding the company through the loss of three founding members within a few short tumultuous years. Visionary design, project management, marketing, and determination were vital in maintaining the direction and momentum of this growing firm. *Nominated by Denise Haruki and Roland Chang of Central Pacific Bank*

County of Hawai'i

John & Donna Rozett
Rozett's Nursery



Following years of hard work and dedication, John and Donna Rozett have seen a dilapidated shade house rebuilt and bloom into a near million-dollar nursery that serves the plant and landscaping needs of the entire county from homes and businesses to the luxury resorts. The company grows over 200 varieties of ornamental plants and has 16 employees. Rozett's Nursery recently acquired a twenty-acre tree-growing plot, a long-term project for continued success of the family-operated business. With their strong financial management and strategic planning, expect Rozett's Nursery to stay green far into the future. *Nominated by Calvin Kang, Central Pacific Bank*

County of Kaua'i

Marynel Valenzuela Ink Spot Quality Printing



After joining the company in 1997 as an employee, Marynel Valenzuela purchased Ink Spot Quality Printing in June 2004 and began the ominous task of transforming herself into a small business owner with personnel, equipment and sales and service to manage. She was tenacious and determined to sustain and expand the business – and she has! The company has doubled the staff to ten full-time employees, 2 part-time and 2 casual workers. To meet her customer demands, the company has extended production hours during non-business hours to do graphic design and printing. Since 2005, annual sales have increased over 20% each year. Marynel attributes the Ink Spot team's success to a combination of price, customer service and quality. *Nominated by Sonia Topenio, Bank of Hawaii*

2008 Entrepreneurial Success of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Rex Matsuno Suisan Company, Limited



Hilo-based Suisan Company Limited is a distributor of frozen, refrigerated and packaged food products that forged its place as an industry leader under the direction of Rex Matsuno. A World War II veteran, Matsuno joined the company in 1947 and rose through the ranks to become company president. As early as 1949, Matsuno realized that diversification of his revenue stream would be a key to the survival as the fishing industry slowly disappeared. He established a frozen foods division with a dozen items, just as packaged frozen foods like TV dinners hit the market. By 1954, this innovative product line was generating the lion's share of income. In 1968, Matsuno obtained an SBA loan to build their first jumbo freezer to accommodate that growth, improve efficiencies, and respond to the needs of the growing island population, and there was no turning back! His vision allowed Suisan to adapt with the changing economic base from sugar to tourism in the 80s and 90s. From their state-of-the-art distribution center, Suisan now serves approximately 700 satisfied customers as they celebrate 100 years of success. *Nominated by Roberta Chu and Art Taniguchi, Bank of Hawaii*

County of Maui

Richard S. Ouye Services Rentals & Supplies



Founded in 1970 by Richard Ouye, Service Rentals & Supplies is one of the oldest and most successful equipment rental businesses on Maui, serving customers in convenient locations in Kahului and Lahaina. The company rents heavy equipment like industrial forklifts and excavators and also retails new equipment like mowers and generators. Started in a small rental warehouse, Ouye now operates from four commercial properties that he owns, one financed with an SBA 504 loan in 1993. Due to his management skills and vision for the business, Ouye has built an outstanding company – no longer a small business – that employs 51 people and generates millions in annual revenues each year. *Nominated by Bill Russell, American Savings Bank*

2008 SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Thomas P. Park Leather Soul LLC



Leather Soul is an exclusive men's footwear store now located at the beautifully-renovated Royal Hawaiian Center in Waikīkī, where it is a destination for shoppers in this niche market. From humble beginnings in 2004 when he invested his savings, owner Thomas Park has built a viable, growing, high-end retail business with a well-trained staff of three employees. Park got a big boost in his business operation with an SBA loan to help build inventory and provide working capital. Each consecutive year of operation, Leather Soul has recorded significant increases in sales as a result of the growing word-of-mouth and other advertising. The growth in sales has also caught the attention of his premium vendors like Alden and J.M. Weston and now Park is often consulted and has even assisted in the design of special editions for the manufacturer. Park travels to destinations such as Japan, New York City and Las Vegas several times each year to attend trade shows and keep abreast of the trends that will affect his market. A defining factor for the success of Leather Soul is certainly the energy, expertise and personalized service that Park provides each and every customer. *Nominated by Bryan Yamashita, Bank of Hawaii*

City and County of Honolulu

Kimberly Nakasato Nakasato Contracting



Young entrepreneur Kimberly Nakasato, a licensed contractor, was named majority member of the newly-formed Nakasato Contracting in 2004. Her general contracting company, which focuses on customer services and quality, still maintains the values of her father's earlier company, yet has expanded their project scope to include larger-scale commercial projects and government contracting jobs. To further tap into that market, Nakasato joined SBA's 8 (a) business development program in early 2008. With support of key personnel including father Brian, husband Korey, and brother Brandon, Nakasato Contracting has a firmly-established reputation for prompt assessments and bids, on-time completion and quality results, frequently getting referrals from architects, subcontractors and satisfied clients. *Nominated by Alan Shimozone, American Savings Bank*

County of Maui

Brennan Purtzer Hawai'i Pacific Media



Brennan Purtzer established his first publication, *The Molokai Island Times*, in October of 2004, just one month after receiving his journalism degree. Convinced that the friendly island needed an objective and professional news source, Purtzer dug in and served as the editor, publisher, reporter, photographer and sales manager as well as owner of the new broadsheet weekly newspaper. Although he was relatively new to the community, he attended every meeting, from town hall gatherings to PTA mixers to sporting and community events. Realizing the inherent limitations facing his small business growth, he developed a business model to accomplish his goal at an affordable price and simultaneously provide benefits to student writers and journalists. His internship strategy has attracted journalism students from recognized colleges in Tampa, Chicago, London and Canada. Subsequently, Brennan partnered to create Hawai'i Pacific Media LLC and now publishes the *Hawai'i Golf Journal* that is distributed not only on Moloka'i, but Maui, Kaua'i and the Big Island. *Nominated by Paul Felix, American Savings Bank*

2008 Small Business Exporter of the Year

State of Hawai'i & Region IX

David Fell and Sandy Kasman Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery, Inc.



With the firm belief that the nursery industry in Hawai'i can offer truly unique and exceptional products to the world market, David Fell and Sandy Kasman started Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery to put thought into action. For those exceptional products, quality is their number one priority, from seed to shipping. To make a further contribution to the state floriculture industry and its world-wide reputation, Fell works to cultivate new, different varieties of plants that are healthy, robust and attract attention of established distributors. He has created new bromeliads known for amazing color and hardiness that could both attract wide interest and survive the rigors of shipping to export destinations. Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery's team has participated in trade associations like Hawai'i Export Nursery Association, Hawai'i Florist & Shippers Association, and the Hawai'i Island Landscape Association to share ideas, solutions and education to improve their business as well as their industry. Fell also contributed to the website for Hawaiian Agricultural Products to support growers with improved management and marketing skills as well as reach prospective buyers who can then order directly from the growers. Whether their plants are destined for Thailand, Costa Rica, Canada or much closer to home, these small business owners adhere to the highest standards for their tropical plants, from exotic bromeliads to anthuriums to xanthosomas. *Nominated by Roxann Uyetake and Stacey Chun Fat, Bank of Hawaii*

City and County of Honolulu

Alan Hornstein Lenox Metals, LLC



Located on three acres in Kapolei, Lenox Metals is a multi-disciplinary metal recycling firm that offers single-source solutions for the collection, transportation, and recycling of scrap metal to buyers in several Asian markets. With a client list that includes utility companies, government, agriculture and construction industries, Hornstein and his staff of eleven provide assistance in identifying and collecting scrap that ranges from large equipment and electronics to materials from building renovations and demolition work. Hornstein has identified viable prospects in the world markets for the sale of recyclable material and works to reduce delays in their sales, shipment and payment cycle. Hornstein has formed alliances with other companies to supply reusable and recyclable equipment for resale to China and other countries. *Nominated by Greg Sokowloski, Central Pacific Bank*

County of Kaua'i

Lori Cardenas Aunty Lilikoi



Lori Cardenas, owner of Aunty Lilikoi, manufactures, wholesales, and retails high-quality passion fruit jellies, mustards, butters, pies and ice cream in the small town of Waimea and shares these special Hawaiian products with both the local and global market. With regular customers in Germany, Japan, France and the United Kingdom, approximately 35% of Aunty Lilikoi's revenues are generated out-of-the-state. Cardenas sells to large retailers like Hilo Hattie, Costco, and Big Save Supermarkets, to visiting tourists and, increasingly, on-line. She resolved shipping problems by designing cardboard dividers to cushion her products when smaller orders were shipped by mail. Supportive of other small businesses on the island, Cardenas seeks out other passion fruit products made by others or works with other entrepreneurs to develop new products like lotions or candles. *Nominated by Jennifer Sandrowski, Bank of Hawaii*

2008 SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Jonathan Ota Tip Top Care & Bakery



The Tip Top Café and Bakery has been a landmark for generations of families on Kaua'i. For more than 90 years, the restaurant is still serving their signature dishes like oxtail soup and banana pancakes and baking their famous macadamia nut cookies for long-time customers. The company has changed with the times, adding the bakery shortly after opening, relocating in 1965, and building the hotel to meet the emerging tourism industry. Following in the footsteps of three previous generations, in 1989 Jonathan Ota tapped his experience in operations and management. He analyzed the different profit generators at Tip Top and decided to lease the in-house bakery to Kaua'i Breadsticks, who now produces their trademark baked goods. The restaurant space was leased to Sushi Katsu for dinner service. With the last available space leased to a salon, the family-owned Tip Top Café reached a synergy that increased sales for each of the separate companies. This family-owned company has demonstrated great entrepreneurial savvy by evolving with the demands of the consumer, a changing marketplace, through economic downturns, natural disasters and a commitment to the community that fosters success. *Nominated by Leland Kahawai, First Hawaiian Bank*

City and County of Honolulu

Roy and Kathy Sakuma Roy Sakuma Productions, Inc. & Ukulele Festivals Hawai'i



Virtually a household word among island families, Roy Sakuma Production has studios in Mililani, 'Aiea, Kaimukī and Windward O'ahu, where over 800 emerging musicians begin strumming an ukulele. Roy, his wife, Kathy, and 25 experienced instructors, all former students, have been teaching music skills for over 21 years. Sakuma took over operations from Ohta-san, his instructor and prominent ukulele player. So the business – and the extended family – grew. The current organization includes family member James Kawano, niece Wendy Yoshioka and Auntie Faye. The succession plan will eventually turn the reigns of the business and ownership opportunities to these “small business owners in training.” Roy Sakuma's skill and dedication to the ukulele and to music have influenced many talented ukulele players, including Jake Shimabukuro and Kelly Boy Delima of Kapena. His annual ukulele festival attracts enthusiasts and music lovers worldwide. *Nominated by Beulah Olanolan and Kehau Lee, Bank of Hawai'i*

County of Hawai'i

Mike Tokunaga S. Tokunaga Stores



Now operated by the third generation, S. Tokunaga Store has continued to evolve as a successful retail operation that caters to the recreational, sport fishing and diving market. Opened 87 years ago as a grocery and tackle store, the shop was destroyed twice by tsunamis and finally moved away from the bay after the 1960 wave, adjusting the product mix to meet customer demands. Michael Tokunaga, who took over for his mother, Ethel, in 1991, was also determined to keep the family business growing. He hired the first employees outside the family in the 90s and now employs three full-time staff. He introduced new products - archery and darts - that also appealed to current customers, boosting revenues 9%, and created a media buzz with tournaments and competitions. Tokunaga contributes his time and energy to supporting education and environmental concerns in his community and industry. *Nominated by Cheryl Octavio, Bank of Hawaii*

County of Maui

Neil Hasegawa **Hasegawa General Store**



Started in 1910 by brothers Shoichi and Saburo, Hasegawa General Store remains Hāna's one-stop shop, selling ice, drinks, souvenirs, sundries and much more. With each generation, the mix of products and services has changed. Grandfather Toshimas constructed the hollow-tile building and added a soda fountain in the 1930s. When Harry followed his father in the 60s, he added a photo processing lab. When Neil took over as the 4th generation, he faced the challenge of rebuilding the store that was destroyed by fire in August 1990. Resilient and determined, the family-owned store opened in the old Hāna Theatre, offering new services such as video rentals, UPS delivery, and Hāna's first ATM, all contributing to the continued growth of the Hasegawa's bottom line. Hasegawa General Store provides jobs for 15 people in this beautiful, remote section of Maui. *Nominated by Alvin Santander, Bank of Hawaii*

2008 Financial Services Champion of the Year

State of Hawai'i and Region IX

William "Bill" Spencer **Hawai'i Venture Capital Association**



A real champion and advocate for emerging companies and their access to capital, William "Bill" Spencer has committed countless time and energy to increasing the awareness and availability of venture capital in Hawai'i. As the volunteer director of Hawai'i Venture Capital Association for more than ten very active years, he passionately promotes and encourages the flow of new venture capital and diversification for local businesses. Active with many technical assistance and service provider organizations, Spencer has also worked on education programs to help science and tech innovators commercialize their products using SBA's SBIR program, angel and venture capital. He's written several guides, including "Tough Love for Entrepreneurs" to introduce the venture capital continuum and the Hawai'i Angels booklet on the preparation of Executive Summaries for business plans. In 2007, Spencer helped HVCA implement an effective community-based Legislative Alert and Testimony system. Bill leads a monthly luncheon series for the HVCA that includes informative and educational presentations on various topics of great interest to businessmen, service providers and investors. *Nominated by David Fisher, Hawai'i Small Business Development Center Network*

City and County of Honolulu

Diana Jackson **TradeEx and SCORE of Hawai'i**



With over 20 years of experience in the small business areas of banking and management, Diana Jackson has a passion for sharing that knowledge with small business owners to boost their ability to succeed. As a long-time volunteer with SCORE, the non-profit funded by SBA to provide free counseling and assistance to small business owners and start ups, Jackson not only works with clients, but has served as a member of the executive committee, Vice Chair and as Chapter Chair in 2007. Jackson made great strides in revitalizing the organization and established alliances with different business organizations. Through Business Factoring Hawai'i, she worked with small firms to manage their cash flow needs, pursue growth strategies, and prepare to obtain traditional financing through bank loans. *Nominated by Randy Au, Bank of Hawaii*

County of Maui

Richard Kehoe RJK and SCORE of Hawai'i



Richard Kehoe started RJK, an accounting firm serving small businesses with annual revenues of \$3,000,000 or less, in 1997 with just one client and a single employee. Now, he serves approximately 300 clients with a full-time staff of four. Kehoe has demonstrated a passion for helping small business owners improve their skills in managing their companies. He is the Maui Branch Manager for SCORE, a national non-profit organization funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. SCORE provides free, confidential counseling through an extensive network of qualified volunteers. He has worked closely with the Small Business Advocate for the county of Maui at the Maui County Business Resource Center. He has also provided technical assistance for the Community Express Loan program. Kehoe has also referred over 100 clients to Maui Economic Opportunity's Core Four Program for small business training, which opens the door to micro loans and other financing. *Nominated by Craig Bode, American Savings Bank*

County of Kauai'i

Dr. Diana Shaw Hawai'i Small Business Development Center Network



As Center Director of the Kauai'i Hawai'i Small Business Development Center Network, Dr. Diana Shaw provides high-quality counseling, training and research assistance to many of the island's small business owners. Focusing on starting or expanding businesses and creating jobs, a critical element that Shaw deals with is access to capital. She provides information on financial services and accounting firms, sources for investment capital and angel investors, as well as the latest SBA financing programs. In the course of one year, Shaw has assisted over 125 clients and provided over 650 hours of consulting, and assisted more than 28 small businesses to secure much-needed financing. Shaw has developed an incredible network of resources to share and link her small business clients with programs, resources and financing to take their company to the next level. *Nominated by Larry Dressler, Bank of Hawaii*

2008 Minority Small Business Champion of the Year

State of Hawai'i, Region IX and National

Johnson Choi Hong Kong.China. Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce



Johnson Choi, the president of the Hong Kong.China.Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce, volunteers countless hours to share his expertise with small businesses to encourage international trade. He often provides free consulting services for minority-owned businesses in the areas of business formation, accounting, marketing and export assessments. He focuses on international business in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Choi has shared his knowledge with small businesses across the state, often on special projects, including Big Island flower growers exporting to Taiwan, Kauai'i coffee growers selling their products in China and even a brewer exploring beer sales in Shanghai. As a member of the Chinese Chamber and the Honolulu Chinatown Lion's Club, he has helped plan and promote events to benefit small businesses in the Chinatown district. Choi established alliances with the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and Hong Kong, the American Manufacturing Association in California, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the Hawai'i Pacific Export Council and the U.S. Commercial Service Office. These alliances resulted in three productive trade missions led by Choi with concrete results for local businesses to build on. *Nominated by Naomi Masuno, First Hawaiian Bank*

County of Kaua'i

Ernesto Pasion **Tax Consulting/Preparation & County of Kaua'i**



Ernie Pasion has put his extensive experience in financial management, budgeting and planning to work to the benefit of many of Kaua'i's small business owners. Employed full-time by the County of Kaua'i, Pasion still works as a tax consultant and frequent pro bono advisor to numerous small businesses who seek his guidance and assistance. He is one of the founders of the Kaua'i Filipino Chamber of Commerce in 2001 and continues to provide leadership to this growing organization as its Vice President and Membership Chair. Pasion effectively acts as a clearinghouse for many minority-owned firms by connecting them with trustworthy experts to assist them with planning, financial management and other services. With his skills and his visibility in the community, he is able to facilitate collaborative solutions for many of the problems that minority owners may face. *Nominated by Sonia Topenio, Bank of Hawaii*

2008 Small Business Journalist of the Year

State of Hawai'i and Region IX

Pamela Tumpap **Maui Chamber of Commerce**



Though not a journalist by trade, Pamela Tumpap, president of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, has published numerous articles on the subject of small business. She is a prolific writer who works tirelessly to report and advocate for small business issues and action. Without a team of researchers or ghost writers, she expends many extra hours confirming content and drafting her comments. For Pam, it is a real labor of love. She also champions the importance of small business in her frequent speaking engagements to service organizations, community groups and professional organizations. Tumpap has a long history of media efforts to improve the understanding and role of small business in the U.S. economy that can be tracked to her work at the Maui Economic Development Board with the Manufacturing Extension Program and the Maui Research and Technology Center. Through her development of new media partnerships to deliver positive messages about Hawai'i's small business community, Pam Tumpap has set a new standard for the quality and content for small business news and views. *Nominated by Bill Russell, American Savings Bank*

City and County of Honolulu

Erika Engle **Honolulu Star Bulletin**



With a 27-year journalism career that spans the radio, television and newspaper industries, Erika Engle demonstrates a keen insight into our local Hawai'i experience in business and community. She has worked in print with the *Pacific Business News* and, most recently, the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*. Since 2001, Engle has been writing the widely-read column, "The Buzz," about our business community. She frequently breaks stories on new businesses starting in the islands and trends that will affect business owners and industries. Frequently, her stories focus on a specific small business with a specific purpose or problem, only to find a common, almost universal concern. Engle puts her concerns for community issues into action through her involvement in many non-profit agencies. *Nominated by Randy Au, Bank of Hawaii*

County of Maui

Sky Barnhart Schual **SkyWrite Journalism, Copywriting and Editing**



A freelance journalist covering issues related to Maui County, Sky Barnhart Schual has increased public awareness of the challenges that small businesses face in our community as well as the many benefits that they provide. A freelance journalist and small business owner herself since 2004, her regular articles are featured weekly in the *Maui News* and the *Maui Weekly* and she is a staff writer for *Maui No Ka 'Oi* magazine. She has also written for the *Lahaina News*, *Maui Concierge*, ATA's inflight magazine, *Hawai'i Fishing News* and many others. Barnhart Schual is also the editor of the quarterly newsletter for the Maui Chamber of Commerce. Her stories relate the uniqueness of each small business with careful analysis and understanding of each owner's passion for their mission and vision. *Nominated by Alvin Santander, Bank of Hawaii*

County of Kaua'i

Joan Conrow **Write On**



Joan Conrow is a freelance journalist and the sole proprietor of "Write On" whose work can be found in many publications across the State of Hawai'i. She writes for the *Honolulu Advertiser*, *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, *Honolulu Weekly*, and numerous regional magazines. Conrow is a contributing editor for *Kaua'i People*, the weekly newspaper delivered island-wide and unmatched in providing information on business topics, community issues and upcoming events including workshops, forums and other activities of interest to small businesses. Frequently, Conrow drafts the "Biz of the Week" stories that highlight locally-owned and operated companies. Her articles offer a realistic view of the challenges of running a small business and the dedication required to succeed. Active in her community, Conrow has conducted presentations on the media for small businesses and assisted non-profits with planning and funding projects. *Nominated by Diana Shaw, Hawai'i Small Business Development Center Network*

2008 Women in Business Champion of the Year

State of Hawai'i

Joann A. Seery **BNI Hawai'i; Referral Institute of Hawai'i; Serious Business Solutions**



Joann Seery, a small business owner and consultant, has been dedicated to helping small businesses increase their revenues and grow their businesses through her efforts in education, skills development and mentoring, much of it directed to women business owners and start-ups. She is the director of Business Networking International and the Referral Institute, both programs providing fundamental knowledge and skills in marketing and referrals for business success. Seery has been a strong champion of SBA programs and services and has participated in workshops and provided technical assistance for prospective borrowers. As a volunteer with the Hawai'i Women's Business Center, she has developed concepts for workshops and other programs. Currently the president of the HWBC board, she is working to fine-tune the programs to help more women get financing, support expansion, and increase the availability of advanced consulting resources. A sought-after speaker on small business, Seery has been featured at meetings, including many chapters of the American Business Women's Association and Professional Women's Network. She truly embraces her company's philosophy based on the idea that "giver's gain" by personally mentoring and coaching small business owners for the best results. *Nominated by Rick Takeshita, Bank of Hawaii*

City and County of Honolulu

Susan Utsugi Central Pacific Bank



Visionary, passionate and a genuine champion for women in business, Susan Utsugi embodies the attributes and traits of a leading role model and mentor. A banker for the past 20 years, Utsugi has directly assisted hundreds of women business owners with financing. She has been a driving force behind Central Pacific Bank's "Women Business Central" program, designed to empower Hawai'i's women business owners and professionals by providing resources, education and networking opportunities. Utsugi was a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Women's Business Center for several years and volunteered regularly as a counselor to clients of the Center.

Nominated by Melanie Wong, President of Premium Inc.

County of Hawai'i

Roberta Chu Bank of Hawaii



Roberta Chu has long served as a role model for women striving to attain their educational, personal and professional goals. A Senior Vice President of Hawai'i Island Commercial Banking Center for Bank of Hawaii, she was influential in the donation of a bank building to create a business incubator in 2005 to help small companies, many women-owned. She has also coached women in their efforts to secure business capital and link them with new opportunities. Chu has conducted sessions on "How to Finance your Business" at SBA workshops and served as an advisor and speaker in schools for Junior Achievement. She also appears at the AAUW-Girl Scouts Math and Science conference for 7th grade girls. With the Hawai'i Island and the Maui Economic Development Boards, Chu worked on initiatives to encourage young women to pursue careers in technology professions and helped fund the Women in Technology program.

Nominated by Carol Van Camp, CB Richard Ellis, and Art Taniguchi, Bank of Hawaii

County of Maui

Carole Kooy Kilakila Employment Service



At the helm of a successful business herself, Carole Kooy finds she has a unique opportunity to encourage and mentor other women, whether they are employees or clients of her employer services firm. By providing a variety of business services like payroll accounting, human resourcing services, in-house risk management and workman's compensation insurance, Kooy has been able to coach and support many other woman-owned small businesses while building her company. She is active with the Maui Business and Professional Women's Association and has served on the Mayor's Small Business Task Force. A director of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, Kooy demonstrates her commitment to the small business community through her leadership and awareness. *Nominated by Rudy Balinbin, First Hawaiian Bank*