

**For Immediate Release**

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**Bernadette Smith Named 2010 ATHENA Award Recipient  
at Memorable 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ATHENA Luncheon**

(Pittsburgh, PA – Monday, September 20, 2010) The 2010 Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA Award recipient is Bernadette Eyer Smith, CFP, Senior Vice President and Senior Portfolio Manager at Fifth Third Bank. She was presented with this honor at the Allegheny Conference on Community Development's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ATHENA Award luncheon at the Westin Convention Center Hotel Pittsburgh.

Among five other inspirational finalists, Smith was chosen for best embodying the ATHENA Award criteria: demonstrating excellence and creativity in her profession, serving the community and assisting other women in reaching their full leadership potential. The award – named after the Greek goddess of strength and wisdom – is unique among other regional honors for women in business because of its focus on developing the next generation of women leaders through mentorship.

With more than 20 years of investment management experience, Smith directly manages more than \$500 million in assets, implementing tailored investment strategies for private and institutional clients. She is also the founder and Managing Executive of the Fifth Third Women's Financial Group.

Gov. Rendell appointed Smith in 2009 to the Inter-branch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness. Her board service includes the Women & Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania; the YWCA Restaurant Franchise, Inc.; and the FISA Foundation, which works to improve the lives of women, girls and people with disabilities. A breast cancer survivor, she also serves on the board of Gilda's Club of Western Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Penn State University and Leadership Pittsburgh Class XXIV.

Upon receiving the award, Smith said, "the real goddesses are the leaders and staff of our community organizations who empower women and girls." She discussed the persistence of the regional wage gap, with women making at least 20% less than their male counterparts, with an even wider gap for women of color. "There is a documented business case for gender diversity; companies with gender diversity produce 35% higher returns than those that don't." She closed by issuing a personal challenge to each attendee to get involved in supporting women and girls in our region.

"It's extraordinary to arrive at our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to look ahead to the next decade and beyond. We salute the past recipients that enhance our program's legacy and welcome Bernadette to that distinguished group. Her marked leadership in a male-dominated field, her depth of service to the community, and her efforts to embolden women and girls to be successful make her a shining example of ATHENA values in action." said Barbara A. McNees, President of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference.

The other exceptional 2010 finalists, chosen among 39 nominees, were:

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- Honorable Cathy Bissoon, U.S. Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court of the Western District of Pennsylvania
- Eva Tansky Blum, Senior Vice President & Director of Community Affairs, PNC Bank; Chair & President, The PNC Foundation
- Suzan M. Lami, Principal, Lami Grubb Architects, LP
  
- Laurie Z. MacDonald, Executive Director, Womansplace, Inc.
- Melissa Murphy, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs & Human Resources, StarKist Co.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event paid special tribute to the program's two-decade legacy – honoring past ATHENA Award recipients and looking into the future with a special announcement: **In 2011, the Pittsburgh ATHENA Award program will also present the ATHENA Young Professional Award, recognizing women leaders age 35 and younger.**

The Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA Award Program Luncheon maintains its standing as one of the largest stand-alone events of its kind among some 500 presented annually across the globe in affiliation with [ATHENA International](#).

Appropriately, Pittsburgh welcomed the trailblazing founder of Chicago-based ATHENA International and author of *Becoming ATHENA: Eight Principles for Enlightened Leadership*, [Martha Mayhood Mertz](#), as keynote speaker for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

“It was a great honor to give the keynote for this special landmark event and to share my personal perspective on the ‘eight principles of enlightened leadership,’ which are the foundation on which the ATHENA Award Program is built. ATHENA International considers the Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA program to be a best practice model for other such programs across the country and around the world. I’m so pleased to have experienced the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and that Pittsburgh will begin presenting the ATHENA Young Professional Award next year. Extraordinary women leaders of every generation deserve to be recognized,” said Mertz.

The Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA Award Program is made possible by support from the Eden Hall Foundation, EQT Corporation, UPMC Health Plan, PNC, *Pittsburgh Magazine*, *Pittsburgh Business Times*, WTAE TV, FedEx Ground, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, Don’s Appliances and Sisterson & Co. LLP.

*\*Recipient photo and other images available upon request.*

**The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Affiliates** – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at [www.alleghenyconference.org](http://www.alleghenyconference.org).

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