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## **2024 Leadership Scholarship Winners Announced by the Optical Women's Association**

**DALLAS, TEXAS – December 17, 2024**

The Optical Women's Association (OWA) is proud to announce the 2024 Leadership Scholarship awardees. Recipients are recognized as OWA members who have served the organization with their dedicated committee work, service, and commitment to growing leadership roles for women in the optical industry. The grants, valued at up to \$2,000 each, will be used to provide professional mentoring opportunities to each recipient, while continuing to promote OWA's founding principles of connecting, inspiring, and leading women in the optical industry. The OWA especially thanks its [Individual Contributors](#) who make it possible to offer these scholarships; because of their generous donations, three women, selected from the nominations put forth in November 2024, will receive special leadership training. They are:

- **Mikki Collins, OWA Digital Marketing Committee (Safilo)**
- **Judy Quinones, OWA Membership Committee (LensCrafters)**
- **Bonnie Whitfield, OWA Connection & Enrichment Committee (The Vision Council)**

An additional *twelve* scholarships will be awarded as the result of a recently-added benefit for the OWA's **Platinum Sponsors**: each company was asked to choose an exceptional female employee who shows promise, dedication, and drive, to also receive this professional opportunity. The twelve women recognized by their companies to be OWA scholarship recipients are:

- **Natalie Ekmekchian, Brand Associate (De Rigo REM)**
- **Jill Eldridge, Regional Sales Director (ClearVision)**
- **Shellie Fahy, 3Os Regional Sales Manager (Safilo)**
- **Meghan Jeffords, National Accounts Manager (Advancing Eyecare)**
- **Kaitlin Jenkins, Global Sales Operations & Logistics (Zyloware)**
- **Ally Kamelhar, Senior Content Specialist, Eyewear Communications (VSP Vision)**
- **Patty Ledford, Data Integrity Manager (GPN Technologies)**
- **Jenni Makher, Manager, Commercial Strategy & Business Development (Thelios)**
- **Nicole McCentee, Director of Key Accounts (EssilorLuxottica)**
- **Cristina Mystkowski, Director of Business Development (EssilorLuxottica)**
- **Janetta Porter, Senior Director of Contact Lens Merchandising (National Vision)**
- **Johanna Showfety, Senior Vision Care Territory Manager (Bausch + Lomb)**

**OWA President Lorie Lippiatt OD** shared: "2024 has been another landmark year for both the OWA and women throughout the optical industry. Because our Individual Contributors and Sponsors continue to demonstrate their belief in our mission, the OWA, through the Leadership Scholarship Award program, is proud to provide avenues which prepare women for leadership roles at the highest levels. The diverse roles and responsibilities held by our talented list of achievers is another shining example of how the OWA supports ALL women in the industry who are passionate about furthering their professional and personal development. On behalf of the Optical Women's Association, congratulations to the 2024 Leadership Scholarship Award winners. We are proud of your achievements and look forward to seeing you prosper for years to come!"

**About the Optical Women's Association:** Founded as a nonprofit in 1997, the Optical Women's Association is committed to supporting and promoting the professional development of women involved in all facets of the optical industry. As the vision of the OWA evolves and expands, it maintains the focus of the OWA's founding principles and core mission: to enhance and promote the leadership role of women in the optical industry through networking, education, and peer support.

Visit [www.opticalwomen.com](http://www.opticalwomen.com) for more information.

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