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EIGHTEEN RISING STARS FROM WSWA MEMBER COMPANIES COMPLETE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

WASHINGTON, D.C., 08/05/2020 – Last week, eighteen women from WSWA member companies Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits (SGWS), Breakthru Beverage Group, Allied Beverage Group, Republic National Distributing Company, United Distributors, Badger Liquor, and Central Distributing successfully completed the 2020 Women in Leadership (WIL) program at Columbia Business School. The program consisted of an intensive four-week, fully live and virtual curriculum designed to accelerate the advancement of women leaders in the wine and spirits industry – enabling them to navigate the business landscape, develop and leverage their talents, and step into roles of greater influence and leadership.

The now annual program is open to women employed by WSWA member companies by way of a nomination from their respective companies. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the program from being delivered in its usual four-day, in-person structure, so was pivoted to a virtual format over a four-week period to accommodate this year’s participants.

“The Women in Leadership WSWA/SGWS initiative originally launched in 2019 in order to address the need to advance more women leaders in our industry,” said Barkley Stuart, Executive Vice President, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits and past chairman of WSWA who helped launch the program in 2019. “We were pleased to be able to deliver the program virtually this year so participants could continue to benefit from the outstanding curriculum. We know that diverse companies perform better by any measure. The Wine and Spirits industry has made great progress in this area, but we still have the opportunity to continue to improve.”

“It was such a pleasure getting to know so many incredibly bright women in our industry in such a short window of time this month,” said Maggie F. Maxwell, Vice President of Wine Sales for Allied Beverage Group, LLC. “Every day I signed on for our WIL sessions, I was bowled over by the collective intelligence and support that was surrounding me.”

“This program was life changing,” said Susan Forrester Rana, a Commercial Strategy Manager with Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits. “Every day we had class, I left feeling motivated and driven to apply what I learned by being a more self-aware and collaborative colleague.”

Christine Desmond of Breakthru Beverage Group was recently promoted to Executive Vice President and attended the program for the first time.

“WSWA has been a true champion of advancing female leaders in our industry and I, along with other female leaders from across the U.S. distributor network, were able to learn from each other as well as the diverse, insightful and brilliant faculty at Columbia,” said Desmond. “The curriculum’s focus on leveraging our talent, inspiring leadership, creating influence, navigating the business landscape and stepping into roles of greater responsibility have further prepared me for my new role leading Breakthru Beverage PA. I have already put some of the knowledge and skills I learned into practice. I look forward to continued dialogue and growth with the amazing women I connected with through the program.”

WSWA will continue to support efforts that develop both talent and diversity and support the advancement of women in the wholesale tier. Congratulations to the class of 2020!

About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

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