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OWIT Recognizes Outstanding Achievements at World Conference in Mexico

Monterrey, Mexico – October 24, 2008 – The celebration of four award recipients and their outstanding contributions to the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) and to the development of international trade was among the highlights of OWIT's 17th Annual World Conference that took place in Monterrey, Mexico October 22-24. With its timely theme *Trade and the Triple Bottom Line: Societal, Economic and Environmental Sustainability*, this year's event featured speakers from North and South America, panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities for its close to 200 participants.

For the first time ever, OWIT awarded a *Lifetime Achievement Award* to trade consultant **Marian Duntley**, a founding member of WIT-LA in 1985 and OWIT in 1989. For 23 years, Duntley has demonstrated continuous involvement and participation at the local level as well as at the international level. She has served as a member of the OWIT Advisory Board and as a personal mentor to many OWIT members. Duntley attended almost all of the 17 Annual OWIT Conferences and was instrumental in securing sponsorship from her employer, Toyota, where she recently retired, after 13 years, from her role as Corporate Customs Director. Duntley has 34 years of customs management experience including Director roles at DHL and Price Waterhouse, and as Senior Import Specialist at the US Customs Service.

OWIT's *Woman of the Year Award* was presented to **Pamela Davis Heilman**, a senior partner at the law firm Hodgson Russ LLP and a long-time advocate for the advancement of women in business. This award is given annually to a woman who has advanced international trade through excellence and innovation and who, by doing so, has enhanced the status of women in international trade and business. In her career, Heilman was an advisor to the first Business Women's Team Canada Trade Mission to Washington D.C in 1997, and in that same year she was also the panel chair at the APEC Women Leader's Network Conference in Ottawa. In 1999, Heilman represented Hodgson Russ as a sponsor of the first Canada-U.S.A. Business Women's Trade Summit in Toronto – another pivotal event to support and encourage cross-border trade. "How great it is to be from the U.S., to have been nominated by Canadians and to receive the award here in Mexico," Heilman said when accepting the award. "I cannot think of a better tribute to the true meaning and spirit of what NAFTA is all about and what it has achieved for our respective economies."

OWIT's Peru Chapter was also celebrated by receiving the *Chapter of the Year Award* for its internationally recognized position of leadership on global trade issues, activities and programs since 1998. With over 500 members, the Peru chapter has also raised awareness for OWIT overall by communicating the organization's goals, programs and events to local, national and international trade communities, and by encouraging the growth of OWIT International with avid participation in the website committee to enhance OWIT's brand.

OWIT'S *Member of the Year Award* was presented to **Carmen Romero** of the Peru Chapter for her exemplary dedication to the organization, which began at the chapter level, serving on the Peruvian executive board for eight years. Following her impressive tenure with the chapter, she joined the OWIT International Executive as VP Chapter Support, building capacity within the existing chapter network. Most recently, she helped facilitate OWIT's involvement at an APEC meeting in Peru.

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Other highlights of the conference included keynote addresses from **Bruno Ferrari**, Director of Promexico, **Josephine Cooper**, Group VP of Government & Regulatory Affairs, Toyota Motor, North America; and **Bertrand Desjardins**, Consul General of Canada in Monterrey. Participants also benefited from a popular networking workshop hosted by the Sherpa Learning Company's Judy Thompson and Gayle Hallgren-Rezac.

About OWIT

The Organization of Women in International Trade (www.owit.org) is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing global trade opportunities for women by providing networking and educational opportunities. It has over 20 chapters worldwide.

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