



1999 Annual Report

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last year, 1999, marked the tenth anniversary of the Organization of Women in International Trade and seems an appropriate time to celebrate the achievements of the past and chart a course into the future. The organization was born in the 1980s when, unbeknownst to each other, women in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Illinois and Orange County California, formed networking groups primarily for women to provide an alternative to the "good old boys" network. Through happenstance, members of the groups learned of each other and realized that there must be a national, and even international, need for such an organization, and in 1989 OWIT was born with nine founding chapters. In just ten short years the organization has grown to include most of the major cities in the US, and equally importantly, representation in eight countries outside the U.S. With this type of growth, it is exhilarating to think where OWIT could be in another ten years.

1999 saw many highlights for OWIT. OWIT's 10th annual international conference organized by the Washington, D.C. Chapter, was a tremendous success with over 400 participants in the 2 2 day conference and many eminent speakers, including Secretary of Commerce William Daley. OWIT also successfully launched a new website spearheaded by Amy Shaughnessy of the Northeast Ohio Chapter at www.owit.org. Members are invited to visit the site and utilize the on-line job bank, where members may post and peruse job openings, the chapter directories, most of which are on-line or coming on-line and the soon to be debuted speakers bureau where members may post their biographical information. Further, OWIT signed Memoranda of Understanding with both IBM's global women entrepreneurs program and the U.S. Small Business Administration. OWIT will work closely with the SBA to ensure that our members have all the latest information on financing options available to them, and with IBM to expand global chapter development. The organization was active in 1999 on an international front as well. As mentioned above, OWIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IBM to assist the organization in its worldwide expansion. In addition, for the first time ever the mid year Spring board meeting was held outside the U.S. in Casa de Campo, Dominican Republic, hosted by the Dominican Republic Chapter. OWIT also was very pleased to welcome its 8th Chapter outside the US with the ratification of OWIT-Ontario, headquartered in Toronto. Further chapters are in development in Chile, England and Switzerland, among other places, and interest in the organization continues to grow and grow.

In just ten short years, the expansion of OWIT has been phenomenal. It is not hard to envision a time in the near future where OWIT members meet on-line and in person from all corners of the globe to do business and keep abreast of the latest happenings in the international community. OWIT has also made great strides in improving member benefits. Through the website, members have access to career opportunities, speaking opportunities, and, of course, each other. The organization appears well poised to leap forward into the 21st century, and it's exciting to envision what the organization may accomplish in the future.

On a personal level, it has truly been my honor to serve this organization. I count many members of many chapters as my good friends and have generated significant business from my contacts in the organization. I encourage everyone to become active in OWIT and better yet take a leadership role. I am reminded of the old cliché "you get out what you put in" but my experience with OWIT has shown me you get out much more than you put in. Let's keep OWIT thriving.

Lisa Landy
1999 OWIT President

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OWIT FINANCIAL REPORT

OWIT has two major sources of income - chapter dues and profits from the annual conference. We use these funds for administration of OWIT. Major expenses include maintenance of the web site, promotional materials, distribution of information to potential and new chapters, OWIT board meeting expenses as well as general administrative costs. This year, OWIT has decided to hire a bookkeeper. This will enable us to maintain more professional records and allow all our financial information to be organized and stored in one location. A complete financial report will be prepared for the October board meeting. If you are a member of an OWIT chapter and would like to review the financial report, please see your chapter's OWIT representative.

CHAPTER REPORTS

Atlanta. Atlanta Women In International Trade (AWIT) will host the annual OWIT conference on October 4-6, 2001, building on its strong programming expertise. In 1999, AWIT's focus groups and committees created opportunities for member to learn and share their knowledge in key areas of international trade. We held our Annual Customs Update Program on Compliance, had an international journalist and author speak at a luncheon, annual reception in honor of the Consular Corps & Trade Commissioners of Atlanta, a program on Ocean Shipping Deregulation, that was presented by Commissioner Delmond H. J. Won, Federal Maritime Commission, and we traveled to Savannah to the port for the weekend (sponsored by AWIT and GA Ports Authority). Our Founders Dinner honored our Woman of The Year – Rachel Bailey – and our guest speaker was Marion Duntley of Toyota Motor Sales. Suruba Wechsler, author of "By the Grace of God: A true Story of Love Family, War and Survival," was our guest speaker for a luncheon meeting on growing up in post independent Congo. Tu-trang Phan, an international trade specialist with the U.S. Department of Commerce, presented a program on "The Impact of Y2K on International Trade Strategies to Minimize Business Operation Disruptions." Each year we participate in Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure which honors the memory of Marsha C. Towers, an AWIT founder who died of breast cancer and also to those who battle the disease. AWIT's philanthropic activities include our annual Christmas gathering for The Atlanta Women & Children's Day Shelter, with food and gifts. The U.S. Customs Service, Office of Investigations in Atlanta, presented AWIT with an award "In Recognition of Your Longstanding Efforts & Professionalism in Promoting International Trade in the Atlanta area". This was the first time the Atlanta U.S. Customs office has bestowed an award of this type to a trade association.

Bermuda. The 1999/2000 year went by very quickly. In May 1999 we held a one day conference at the Sonesta Beach Hotel, entitled "The New Millennium: A Time for New Beginnings." The Hon. Paula A. Cox J.P. M.P., Minister of Labour, Home Affairs and Public Safety gave the opening address. Almost 100 people, at least half of who were non-members, participated in the three presentation streams, whose themes were professional development, personal development and technical/legal issues.

Building on the success of the conference our program for the rest of the year focused on either topical issues - "The new CURE Legislation" (Commission for Unity and Racial Equality) and "Global Banking- remaining competitive" or highlighting the achievements of women. "The Women of Influence" series which covered the legal profession, insurance, accounting and investments brought distinguished women to the fore in a networking environment to talk about how they reached their goals. (Although their backgrounds were diverse their keys to success were very similar.) These events were well received as we had many repeat guests.

As the conference was also a financial success, the chapter decided to use some of the proceeds to create a scholarship to the Bermuda College for a female student studying business. We also resolved to make a donation to an organization that dealt with issues relating to women.

We are looking forward to 2000/2001.

Boston. Women in World Trade (WWT) – Boston was founded in 1986 and now has 125 members. We hold monthly meetings between September and June, usually held during the evenings with wine and cheese/vegetable trays for informal networking followed by a formal program with speaker or panel. Programs generally cost \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members except Consular Corps Reception and an annual Global Business Alliance of New England "International Networking Evening" in February. We use the mail for flyers on meetings and also email in "broadcast" form. We are seeking more members for committees and the board.

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Dallas. WITT (Women in International Trade of Texas) holds an annual silent auction fundraiser. This year we presented a check for \$1300 to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, with proceeds earmarked for Kosovo relief efforts. We had our networking holiday party and WITT's Year 2000 Board Elections in December. Our chapter holds monthly dinner presentations by leading international trade experts, tailored to the busy international trade and logistics corporate personnel. Our speakers included:Carolynn Lucas, an experienced specialist in international cargo insurance for Import & Export shipments and Cargo Claims; Ginger G. Downs, Vice President & Manager of Export Trade Operations of Bank of America; Adrienne Braumiller who is widely recognized as a leading authority in customs law spoke on all the latest revisions on Incoterms; Caleb Hayhoe spoke on how buying agencies operate and what they offer importers. Carlos Bello Roch spoke on how NAFTA is affected by Mexico's trade agreements with other countries and regions; Evelyn M. Suarez gave us an update on the status of industry efforts to obtain funding for Customs Automation. Later this year we will have two of our own board members, Sue-Ann Linnemann, International Trade Manager for U.S. Customs, and Diane Thompson Divin, Corporate Import Administrator for Mary Kay Inc., speak on how to understand and comply with U.S. Customs laws in the area of valuation and assists. We have continued to provide a monthly newsletter to our members and we recently began sending e-mail messages announcing monthly meetings.

Denver. Women in International Trade - Colorado had a very good year in 1999. We reached over 60 members and held an event every month except August. One of our most successful events was on international marketing and brand imaging featuring executives from Coors Brewing International. Other programs covered topics ranging from the Euro Dollar, to working in China, to the international business environment in Colorado, and concluding with our Second Annual Holiday Tea. We had several members attend the OWIT Conference in Washington, D.C. in 1999, and we are looking forward to having some of our members at the 2000 OWIT Conference in San Diego.

Dominican Republic. The past year has been one of great experiences for WIT-REPUBLICA DOMINICANA, INC. The Board of Directors as well as the membership worked on several activities aimed to keep us informed and updated. Among these events were a seminar on "Investment Opportunities in the DR" and a seminar on "Franchising: A Business Option." The DR chapter also participates in the "1st International Business Women Conference" held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the "Expo Franchise International" held in Orlando, Florida as well as the "99 Expo USA" organized by the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Other activities sponsored by the DR chapter were aimed to promote the develop of network including a cocktail held on the day of the WIT Member General Meeting as well as another cocktail on the Women International Day. Last but not least, as part of the chapter traditions, we organized an annual event for social benefit that in the past year was a tea afternoon to benefit children with Downs Syndrome.

Jamaica. The Jamaica Chapter of WIT was formed three years ago by the then-head of the AmCham Dr. Ofe Dudley. We now have 50 individual members and three corporate sponsors. Most of the activity to date has been focused around luncheon speakers (commercial topics and women of distinction) and a small trade fair. This year we will be branching out to offer two half-day skill-building seminars on export/import issues for the membership as well as sponsored tours through the Jamaican Trade Development Agency (JAMPRO) and the Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of the West Indies as well as the businesses of several local women entrepreneurs. Our challenge is to find inexpensive ways for our members to truly interact and network versus more formal classroom/luncheon settings and we would welcome any ideas on the subject.

Los Angeles. Women in International Trade, Los Angeles is comprised of members both women and men who are customs brokers and attorneys, import/export managers, international bankers, freight forwarders and international marketers. We hold our meetings on the third Wednesday of the month where the speakers address specific issues pertaining to trade policy and legislation, shipping, customs, financing or technology as well as country or regional topics. One of our most innovated programs is our semi-annual Trade Tech, a half-day conference that focuses on how technology is affecting trade. Our two very popular social programs are the Night Under the Stars at the Hollywood Bowl where we hear a concert featuring music from a particular country and our charity event, WIT-Mas, where we celebrate the holiday season and at the same time raise funds for our local charity. This year we established our scholarship fund in the name of Marjory M. Shostak, OWIT Women of the Year in 1998. We plan to give our first award in 2001 to a college student who is actively pursuing a major in international business or law. Finally, our quarterly newsletter is filled with insightful articles on trade matters and the latest developments with our chapter. Information on our chapter can be found on our website at www.witla.org.

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Miami. WIT-Miami had an extraordinary year in 1999. WIT-Miami continued with its series of monthly programs but had many additional special and successful events. The chapter led the first U.S. Department of Commerce sponsored trade mission to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic which was very successful and a great chance to integrate mission participants from the Miami chapter with members of the Jamaica and DR chapters. WIT-Miami was also privileged to host the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam in one of his few visits to the Southeast region. In addition, the chapter hosted a special fundraiser at the art gallery of world pop artist Romero Britto, which attracted significant press opportunities and expanded the chapter's community outreach. Further, WIT-Miami began to implement the conferences required by its grant of \$49,500 from Enterprise Florida. The chapter held the first of five country seminars, this one on Mexico, and in conjunction with the conference, completed, with the assistance of the University of South Florida, a "Doing Business in Mexico" guide. The remaining seminars for Venezuela, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Jamaica will be held in the year 2000. Finally, WIT-Miami decided to appoint a new position to its board to expand programming to adjacent Broward County. With tremendous growth in the tri county area of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, WIT-Miami looks forward to expanding its reach.

New York. The New York Chapter of the Organization of Women in International Trade has had another wonderful year, during which we worked to provide our members with interesting and informative meetings, and to increase our responsiveness to our member's interests. Our meeting topics included the following:

- "Bribery and Other Acts of Dirty Business", held on September 15, 1999, this meeting addressed how the Foreign Corrupt Practices act impacts international business, and featured Michele Forzley, Managing Director of Forzley & Co.
- Networking meeting/cocktail event: "The Euro One Year Later - What Lies Ahead" held January 25, in conjunction with Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and the Italy America Chamber of Commerce.
- "An Update On The Ocean Shipping Reform Act" with speaker: Tom Panebianco, General Counsel of the Federal Maritime Commission, which was held on October 20, 1999 and co-sponsored by the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association.
- "An Update On U.S. – China Relations" presented by one of the premiere experts on China, Harry Harding, Dean and Professor of International Affairs and Political Science at the Elliot School of International Affairs of George Washington University, who spoke concerning recent Chinese relations with the United States and Taiwan, as well as the potential for WTO membership. This meeting was held on November 17, 1999.
- "OWIT-NY Annual WITMAS Party," held on December 8, 1999, celebrated the holiday season at the French Culinary Institute's International Culinary Theater. The evening included a cooking demonstration, handouts of recipe secrets, socializing with fellow WIT members, and plenty of holiday cheer!

In addition, OWIT-NY spent a lot of time behind the scenes laying the groundwork for overall improvements to the organization.

Northeast Florida. The Northeast Florida OWIT chapter (NFWIT) publishes a bi-monthly newsletter and organizes bi-monthly events for its members. The chapter was represented at the International Day in Tallahassee at the end of March 1999. Lisa Landy, OWIT President, came from Miami to speak at NFWIT's luncheon meeting in April. The June luncheon meeting featured Rob Kearney of World Golf Village, who spoke of his company's current marketing strategies and plans for future international marketing. Suzanne Judas of Holland & Knight was the guest speaker at the October luncheon program; she spoke on international intellectual property rights as they pertain to licensing, patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets. NFWIT held a special program in November with three other international organizations in the area. The purpose of the meeting was to share information. The annual holiday party was held at the home of NFWIT member Pat Vail.

Northeast Ohio. Women in International Trade - Northeast Ohio (WIT-NEO) seeks establish educational opportunities in areas of interest to the international community; encourage and stimulate the exchange of views, ideas and information concerning foreign commerce and international relations; promote professional contacts with other international trade colleagues; and enhance the status and interest of women in the field of international business. Our chapter hosts monthly and annual events for a membership base that covers the region from Cleveland to Canton, Norwalk to Youngstown. Our membership represents all facets of the international business community, including marketing, trade, tax, legal, finance, accounting, logistics, freight, import/export, insurance and government. Our website can be found on: <http://www.witneo.org>.

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Orange County, California. Women In International Trade Orange County sponsored a wide variety of luncheons and seminars in the last year. These included an e-commerce conference, Annual Transportation Seminar and luncheon, U.S. Customs seminars, Customs Brokers Review Class, and Hazardous Materials Certification Classes. Members also participate in activities designed specifically for them, a Customs User Group and an Export Users Group which both meet bi-monthly to discuss relevant topics in depth. Exciting programs in the works are a China Video Conference, Annual Transportation Program, Letter of Credit Seminar, and Export Licensing Seminar.

Ontario, Canada. Preparations began in 1999 for the launch of OWIT's first Canadian chapter, which occurred in Toronto on International Women's Day, March 8, 2000. WITO grew out of the need to carry on the valuable networking established at the first Canadian Women's Trade mission to Washington in 1997 and followed by the Canada/US Businesswomen's Summit in the spring of 1999. Research conducted prior to the launch convinced us that we should focus our initial initiatives on e-commerce. Since March we have provided our members with two seminars: "E-Commerce The Legal Challenges" and "Creating International E-Commerce Partnerships". In addition we launched "Getting Connected" a newsletter aimed at linking our members to information resources and contacts that will result in more women doing more business across borders. Currently we have 60 members and growing.

San Diego and Tijuana. The San Diego and Tijuana chapters worked together in 1999 to prepare for the 11th Annual OWIT International Business Conference – which will be held October 11-13, 2000. This conference will feature such prominent speakers as Marjory Searing, Acting Assistant Secretary and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, who will also accept the OWIT Woman of the Year Award. For further details on the Conference, please see <http://www.owit.org> or contact a director (see below). WIT-San Diego welcomes OWIT members as well as non-members to attend, experience and learn the latest on, among other things, border trade -- a maquiladora tour is part of the conference. The year 2000 directors of WIT-San Diego are Helena Wallentin, President and Secretary hw@sd.zhgm.com, Claudia Allen, Vice President Membership, Liliana Zuniga-Avila, Vice President Programs, Irma Lopez, Treasurer, Lupina Miller, Tijuana Liaison, and Karen Hennequin, OWIT representative and WIT-San Diego founder khengn@aol.com. Welcome!

WIT-San Diego has been an active chapter of OWIT for over ten years and the membership exceeds 80; WIT-San Diego meets for dinner the second Thursday of every month for an informative networking event with prominent speakers. WIT-San Diego takes its members on an annual Maquiladora Tour and a Border Patrol Tour.

Washington, DC. Among its many activities during FY 2000, WIIT-Washington, D.C., proudly hosted the 10th Annual OWIT Conference in October 1999 (see separate article on the OWIT Conference) as well as a Congressional Reception in the Caucus Room of the House of Representatives Cannon Office Building. Over a dozen Congressmen and Congresswomen attended this reception and showed great interest in meeting the members visiting from their districts' OWIT chapters. Throughout the past year, WIIT members organized and attended chapter-wide lunches on U.S. Trade Relations with Asia and the Pacific Rim (speaker: Marjory Searing, Acting Director General and Assistant Secretary of Commerce for the U.S. Commercial Service), international anti-corruption initiatives (speaker: Eleanor Lewis, Chief Counsel for International Commerce at the Department of Commerce), global customs issues (speaker: Michael T. Schmitz, Deputy Chief Counsel of the U.S. Customs Service), the global Internet environment (speaker: Esther Dyson, Chairman of Edventure Holdings), environmental issues (speaker: Harriet Babbitt, Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development). Our "brown bag" lunches addressed, among many others, the topics of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Caribbean Basin Initiative, America's Business Forum prior to the FTAA Ministerial, China's WTO accession, international cultural property protection, export control and encryption policies, deregulation in Japan, and the overall trade agenda of the 106th Congress. The Professional Development and Job Bank section held 13 brown bag seminars, organizational meetings and networking socials on topics such as "How to Get a Position in a State Trade Agency," "How to Get a Job with an International Financial Institution," "How to Negotiate a Salary," "How to Interview with the Media," "Opportunities for Working Parents," and "Smart Investment Strategies for Women." It also worked on developing a mentoring program and sponsored the OWIT Job Bank. Throughout the past year, WIIT members also organized a number of foreign language tables in German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese. And everyone had a great time at the 1999 Summer Social at the Embassy of Poland and the Holiday Social at the Embassy of Singapore.

The year ended with a very successful Annual Meeting and Dinner in May, when the results of WIIT's Fourth Annual Survey of Public Opinion on International Trade Issues were announced. U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky was presented with WIIT's Outstanding Woman in International Trade Award for 1999-2000.

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1999 OWIT CONFERENCE REPORT

WIIT-Washington, D.C. hosted the 10th annual OWIT Conference in October 1999. More than 230 people participated in "Trade Matters: Trade Policy and Practice in the New Millennium." (Please also see the photos provided as part of this report.) Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley set an upbeat tone for the conference during his opening keynote address at the Georgetown University Conference Center. Deputy United States Trade Representative Susan G. Esserman gave the "Washington Perspective" on international trade; key Congressional staff members, a representative of the AFL-CIO, and members of the trade press also presented their views. Panelists from the Department of Commerce, the Congress, and the business community then presented a case study to explain the trade policy-making process.

Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Nebraska), an enthusiastic champion of international trade and chair of Senator John McCain's Presidential Election Committee, gave thoughtful remarks during the luncheon on the first day. Following lunch, the focus shifted to global trade issues with a panel on "How the Global Marketplace sees the United States," featuring representatives of the European Commission, the Canadian Embassy, and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office. The ensuing breakout sessions covered "Balancing National Security and Trade," "Protecting Intellectual Property Rights," "International Shipping and Trade," and "Global Mergers – Trade Issues and Alliances." Conference participants were able to hear from and meet with over a dozen Members of Congress at a reception held on the Hill that evening.

Congressman Sander Levin (D-Michigan) opened the second day of the conference with a keynote speech that reflected his progressive views on international trade policy. His remarks received extensive press coverage.

The breakout sessions that followed represented the "nuts and bolts" issues in the practice of trade matters, addressing electronic commerce, small business, Y2K concerns, and export financing. The rest of the conference was dedicated to professional development issues, with particular regard for women and their career paths. Preliminary results of the second OWIT-wide salary survey were released, and employment experts spoke of the professional challenges, issues and opportunities for women.

Mary Lou Lackey, Motorola's Vice President and Director for Global Trade Policy, served as the last speaker at the wrap-up luncheon. OWIT recognized Deborah A. Lamb, Chief Minority Trade Counsel of the Senate Finance Committee, for her many contributions to trade policy as Senator Moynihan's key advisor. WIT-Northeast Ohio was chosen as the Outstanding OWIT Chapter of the Year for its work on the OWIT website. Rebecca Hunt Armand was honored as the OWIT Chapter Member of the Year for her efforts to found new chapters in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Hosting the OWIT Conference enabled WIIT-Washington, D.C. to renew and solidify ties with all sister chapters in the United States and overseas. WIIT-DC will continue its efforts to build on our national and international network and to remind U.S. policy makers of the importance of international trade. As we look forward to the new millennium, OWIT and WIIT are faced with a wonderful opportunity to forge a model of interaction and cooperation that will strengthen both organizations in the years to come.