



MEDIA CONTACT

Michael Bilello
Senior Vice President, Communications & Marketing
michael@swa.org | (202) 243-7506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06/14/2021

TWENTY-ONE WOMEN IN WHOLESALE COMPLETE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

WASHINGTON, D.C., 06/14/2021 – Last month, twenty-one women from eight WSWA member companies including Allied Beverage, Breakthru Beverage Group, Fedway Associates, Great Lakes Wine & Spirits, Major Brands, Martignetti Companies, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits successfully completed the 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 once again pivoted to a virtual format over a four-week period to accommodate this year’s participants.

“This was a highly unique and valuable experience, unlike any other professional development program I’ve been exposed to in my career,” said participant and Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits Vice President of Communications & Corporate Social Responsibility Cindy Haas. “I feel more confident about myself as a leader and learned a number of practical skills that will help me make my voice heard, expand my network, and be a more effective mentor. I am incredibly proud to have been selected for this program, honored to have met all the incredible women from participating companies around the world, and thankful to work for a company like Southern Glazers Wine & Spirits that invests in its people in such a meaningful way.

“I was thrilled to participate in the Columbia University, Women in Leadership Program as Chairwomen of WSWA’s Women’s Leadership Council (WLC) and representative of Martignetti Companies,” said WLC Chairwoman Jessica Cyr. “Not only were the professors and speakers elite in their respective fields, but also the caliber of women in the program from across the globe in various industries were a source of inspiration and motivation as we shared our challenges in our respective industries. The most impactful session for me was on Feedback by Deb Riegal. Through her dynamic and engaging style, Deb shared why the importance of both giving and receiving feedback is critical for individuals to develop and improve their skillset.”

On the last day of the program, participant and Allied Beverage Group Sales Manager Liany Villafane shared, “Today was the last day of my leadership class, my head and my heart are full of treasures learned and gratitude for the opportunity that was given to me. I discovered so much about my leadership qualities, areas for me to improve on, and opportunities for me to share with others. I was able to apply my learnings right away since the classes were held virtually. A COVID benefit.”

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 2021!

Kristi Weber, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Cindy Haas, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Raquel Fellings, Great Lakes Wine & Spirits
Lesley Weaver, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Jessica Partington, Winebow
Monica Chaplin, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Alisa Fuller, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Sam Shiekman, Fedway
Melva Pete, Major Brands
Liany Villafane, Allied Beverage Group
Jennifer Chenoweth, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Heidi Klein, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Rosie Haugh, Breakthru Beverage Group
Claudia Chain, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Shelly Flores, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Marrisa Brown, Breakthru Beverage Group
Jessica Baldo Riggio, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Paige Gibbons, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Jessica Cyr, Martignetti Companies
Prasanna Dasari, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
Erin Connolly, Breakthru Beverage Group

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.

To learn more, please visit www.wswa.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

###

