

Alfred University to present annual Galanis Awards

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BUFFALO Alfred University will honor five Buffalo-area firms with Galanis Awards for Excellence in Family Business. AP Wagner, Inc., Keller Technology Corporation, NOCO Energy Corporation, Try-It Distributing, Inc., and Walsh Insurance Group will receive awards during a banquet celebration Wednesday, Sept. 15, at the Mansion on Delaware Avenue in Buffalo. The awards are made possible by a gift from the families of Terry Galanis Sr. and Terry Galanis Jr. Galanis Sr. is a 1940 graduate of Alfred University and founder of Sealing Devices, Inc., of Lancaster. Galanis Jr. is the president of Sealing Devices and a member of the AU Board of Trustees. Keynote speaker for the awards ceremony will be F. Peter Cuneo, a 1967 Alfred University graduate and member of the AU Board of trustees. Renowned for his ability to turn around struggling businesses, Cuneo serves as vice chairman of the board at Marvel Enterprises. His presentation is titled "True Business Leadership in Today's Environment." Winners of Galanis Awards are judged on a number of criteria that the Galanises and Alfred University believe are the hallmarks of successful family enterprises: commitment to employees and the local community; innovation and foresight; and growth and stability. AP Wagner was founded as The Buffalo Washing Machine Repair Company in 1928 by Frank and Clara Jarmusz. The company is now run by a third generation of the Jarmusz family: Donald and Michael Jarmusz, grandsons of the company founders, serve as president and chief executive officer, respectively. Today, AP Wagner is the second-largest appliance parts distributor in the United States and Canada, employing approximately 200 people at 14 locations. The firm strives to be a solid corporate citizen, contributing to several local and national charities in the U.S. and Canada. Over the last several years the Depew headquarters has also administered company wide donation drives to support our troops serving in Iraq and the Holiday Toys for Tots program sponsored by Haven House. Keller Technology Corporation was founded in Buffalo in 1918 by Joseph Keller and his son, Arthur. Then operated under the name Duplex Buffing Company, the firm began as a general machine shop serving local industries in the Buffalo area. Over the next four decades, the company enjoyed significant growth, providing machine-building services to customers throughout the country. Today, Keller Technology is an engineering and equipment-manufacturing specialist with facilities in Tonawanda, NY, and Huntersville, NC. Three generations of the Keller family are actively involved in the business. Arthur "Bud" Keller Jr., grandson of founder Joseph Keller, is company chairman. His three children are company officers: son Michael is president; son Peter is vice president; and daughter Kathy is treasurer. Michael's children (Mark, Libby and Scott) and Peter's son, Barnaby, hold various management positions. The company employs approximately 250 workers. Keller Technology has a history of supporting charitable endeavors in the local communities, including area hospitals and colleges and universities. NOCO Energy was founded in Tonawanda 1933 by Reginald B. Newman as one-employee, one-truck company delivering coal to residential customers in the Buffalo area. Today, the third-generation family-owned business is one of Western New York's largest suppliers of energy and petroleum products and operates several gasoline and convenience stores throughout the region. NOCO supplies gasoline, diesel fuels, industrial and residential heating fuels, aviation fuels, chemicals and asphalts to a variety of customers and also operates 39 NOCO Express stores. The firm employs approximately 560 people in New York and Vermont and recently launched two new divisions: NOCO Bioproducts, which sells and distributes agriculturally-based renewable products; and NOCO Energy Marketing, LLC, which markets natural gas in Western New York and Northern Pennsylvania. A third generation of the Newman family is actively involved in the business. Donald Newman and Reginald Newman II continue to serve on the NOCO Board of Directors, while Donald's sons, James and Michael Newman, were named president and vice president, respectively, in 2001. NOCO supports several Buffalo-area community organizations, including Shea's Performing Arts Center, the United Way and BPO. Stephen L. Vukelic founded Try-It Distributing in his native Lackawanna in 1928, when he began bottling soft drinks to help meet the demand of thirsty Western New Yorkers during Prohibition. More than 75 years later, Try-It Distributing Inc., a third-generation family business, is one of the country's most respected beverage distributors. Today, Try-It is run by second and third generations of the Vukelic family. Stephen's son, Eugene, serves as chairman and CEO. His five sons E. Paul Vukelic (president and COO), Jeffrey S. Vukelic (executive vice president), Timothy J. Vukelic (vice president, sales support systems), Peter A. Vukelic (vice president, premium and high end products) and Matthew J. Vukelic (manager, delivery department) all hold management positions with the company. The company has undergone major changes since its founding 76 years ago. It has grown from 15 employees to 200; from four delivery trucks to 65; and has moved from a 20,000 square-foot building to a 140,000 square-foot

state-of-the-art facility in the Buffalo suburb of Lancaster. Try-It remains committed to the communities it serves. The company is a supporter of organizations and charities, including those benefiting children, and the firm's management and staff serve on numerous community boards and committees. The company encourages responsible consumption of alcohol and for years has spearheaded awareness programs in area schools and through the media. Walsh Insurance Group was founded in 1860 when James Mooney, an Irish immigrant, established James Mooney and Bro., specializing in insurance and real estate. The company has had various name changes over the years, but has remained family owned and operated through four generations, enjoying a steady record of growth and stability. Today, Walsh Insurance Group which is comprised of Walsh Duffield Companies, M Insurance Agency and The Jacob Hauck Agency provides property and casualty insurance for personal and commercial customers, sells employee benefits products to its commercial customers and has an individual life insurance department. A fourth generation of the Walsh family currently runs the business. John N. Walsh III is chairman and CEO; Edward F. Walsh Jr. is president and COO; and Michael K. Walsh and Theodore B.K. Walsh are executive vice presidents. Their fathers, John N. Walsh Jr. and Edward F. Walsh, have been business partners for more than 55 years and remain actively involved with the firm, assisting the younger generation. Walsh Insurance Group employs 58 people in offices in Buffalo and Hamburg. The Walsh family is collectively involved in leadership service at over 100 organizations, including The Kaleida Health System hospitals, United Way, UB Foundation, NCCJ, YMCA, Child & Family Services, Nichols School, Medaille College, WNY Foundation, Cummings Foundation, Goodwill, Hospice and many, many others. Terry Galanis Jr. pleased with how the program has grown since the first award was given in 1996. "This is the finest group of award-winners we've ever had. It's a very diverse group of businesses with a long history in the region," he said. "It shows the solid family roots that are here in Buffalo and Western New York." The Galanises and Alfred University present the awards to shine a spotlight on family businesses, which serve as the backbone to the region's and nation's economy. "We want to recognize family firms. It's not easy to continue to build a family business through the generations. It takes leadership and guidance," Galanis Jr. said. "The awards honor the entrepreneurial strength of people and their families."