

# WJA NEWS

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## **WJA TO HONOR SYBIL YURMAN AND STEVEN KAISER AT 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS**

*Jewelers Mutual to be a 2008 Pillar of Distinction Sponsor*

NEW YORK, Dec 5 – Women’s Jewelry Association will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008 with a year-long series of tributes, on both the national and chapter levels, to honor the organization’s founders as well as those who have shown extraordinary support for women in the industry. The WJA Board of Directors announced today their selection of Sybil Yurman, president and chief marketing officer of David Yurman, as the 2008 “Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement” honoree and Steven Kaiser, president and CEO of Kaiser Time, as the recipient of the “Ben Kaiser Award.” They will be honored at the WJA 25th Annual Awards for Excellence gala, to be held in New York City on Sunday, July 28th at 6:00 PM.

In addition, Jewelers Mutual Insurance has signed on for the second year in a row as a WJA “Pillar of Distinction” Sponsor, according to WJA President Ann Arnold. “We are so grateful for Jewelers Mutual’s generous support and that of our other sponsors, said Ms. Arnold. “And we are thrilled to honor these two exceptional individuals on this milestone anniversary.

“Sybil Yurman is an extraordinary business woman -- a visionary and risk taker, who by her example has been an inspiration to so many women in our industry,” said Ms. Arnold. “And as we celebrate our past, it is fitting to honor the son of Ben Kaiser, after whom the award was first named in 1996. Steven’s generosity to WJA and the industry, like his father’s, has been exemplary,” Ms. Arnold added.

Sybil Yurman, wife and partner of jewelry designer David Yurman, has been instrumental in the success of the renowned design house since its inception in 1979. “Sybil Yurman is a true muse, partner and businesswoman, said Mr. Yurman, who met his wife in 1969 while he was working in a sculptor's studio and she was a young artist writing grant proposals. “Sculptors tend to focus on form,” said Mr. Yurman. “She opened my eyes to a wider creative process.”

His sense of design, coupled with her keen business sense, marketing instincts and aesthetic values – along with a mutual interest in the arts – provided a solid foundation

for the relationship and the visionary company that today is a leader in the international jewelry industry.

In 2001, Ms. Yurman's direction was a key factor in the development of the company's first lifestyle advertising campaign, which has since become iconic. The simple yet striking black and white print images feature David Yurman designs on notable faces in fashion, including Kate Moss, Amber Valetta, Naomi Watts and Natalia Vodianova.

In 2001 David and Sybil Yurman established their namesake Humanitarian and Arts Foundation as a means to provide significant support to a variety of organizations, including ALS, YouthAIDS, Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, Project Angel Food, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. "I absolutely love what I do and that we have been able to capitalize on our artistic abilities to use this success to aid the causes of others," said Ms. Yurman.

"WJA has nurtured the careers of hundreds of women through its many activities, educational conferences, scholarship programs, and networking opportunities," said Ms. Yurman. "I'm thrilled to accept this prestigious award from my WJA sisters on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The jewelry industry would not be the same without this important organization."

Steven Kaiser has been an owner and executive in the watch and jewelry industry for over 25 years. He began his career in 1982 with Baume & Mercier, USA, and ultimately rose to president and CEO. Under his tenure as president and CEO, from 1993 until 1998, Baume & Mercier grew into a leader of the luxury watch industry and increased sales 80% with 25% fewer open doors.

In 1999 he assumed the position of executive shareholder of Benedom, Inc., a subsidiary of luxury brand mega-giant, the Louis Vuitton, Moët, Hennessey Group. Mr. Kaiser directed the successful introduction of the Christian Dior and Fred Joallier brands to the U.S. market. He sold his Benedom interest to LVMH and in 2000 founded Kaiser Time, Inc., a full service consulting/business development, executive recruiting and mergers and acquisitions firm. The company currently works with over 100 leading manufacturers and retailers in the watch and jewelry industry, including GE MONEY, Patek Philippe, JCK/ Reed Exhibitions, Tiffany & Co. and the Swatch Group.

"I'm honored to receive this special WJA award that recognized my father. He saw the potential of WJA from its infancy and encouraged me to join in 1983. I've watched it evolve into one of the most dynamic and important organizations, and I'm proud to be part of it," said Mr. Kaiser, who is an active member of many industry organizations, where he has held important positions, including JIC, JVC, American Watch Association, and Jewelers for Children. He is the fifth recipient of the Ben Kaiser Award.

The 2008 Awards for Excellence is being totally redesigned for WJA's Silver Anniversary, according to Dinner Co-chairs Mindy Fielman of Hearts On Fire and Lisa Cochin of the Diamond Promotion Service. "Only two awards will be given this year," said Cochin. "We will honor all of our past presidents and recipients of the Hall of Fame and Ben Kaiser Awards in a gala event that will celebrate the extraordinary leadership that has made WJA such a vibrant organization as well as the new initiatives that will shape it for tomorrow."

WJA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary will officially be kicked off on January 22 by its Metropolitan Chapter, representing the New York City tri-state area. It will host a member event at Gracie Mansion in New York City, the official residence of the Mayor of the City of New York. Peggy Kirby, one of the original founders of the national organization and the first recipient of the Hall of Fame Award, will be recognized. And members will have the opportunity to tour the historic mansion, according to incoming Metro Chapter president, Michelle Kwiat Siegel.

Other chapter and national events planned for the anniversary year will be announced soon.

WJA, founded in 1983, is the preeminent association of professional women in the jewelry, watch and related businesses. Through the national organization, headquartered in Mt. Royal, NJ, and a network of 12 regional chapters, members benefit from educational and networking opportunities, mentoring, scholarships, design competitions and recognition programs. For member or sponsorship information visit its website at [www.womensjewelry.org](http://www.womensjewelry.org).

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