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*For more information, contact:*

Angela Jamison, Communicopia  
[angela@communicopiaPR.com](mailto:angela@communicopiaPR.com)  
919-827-1689

Lisa Higginbotham, FiveStar Awards & Engraving  
[lisah@fivestarawards.net](mailto:lisah@fivestarawards.net)  
919-954-1130

**Cary Businessowner Elected President of International Awards and Personalization Association**

(CARY, N.C., March 18, 2021)—A Cary businessowner is the new president of an international association representing retailers and suppliers of awards and recognition items.

Lisa Higginbotham, owner of FiveStar Awards & Engraving, was recently inducted as the 2021 President of the Awards and Personalization Association (APA), an organization that provides education, meetings and access to professionals who create, distribute, or sell recognition and personalized products.

She has served on the Board of Directors since 2015, one of 12 individuals from member companies elected by the association's membership.

Higginbotham serves primarily corporate and industrial customers with high quality awards, recognition items and engraving services from the company she founded in 1999. The design, engraving, printing and cutting processes are produced in-house by Higginbotham, her husband Jeff and staff.

"Last year was tough for many retailers and suppliers in our industry due to the pandemic. One of my greatest motivators as a businessowner, and now as president of APA, is how helpful and supportive our membership is of one another," said Higginbotham, a Certified Recognition Master (CRM)—the highest designation in the awards and personalization industry, held by only 45 people worldwide.

"I'm honored to lead the association that gives me the tools and knowledge necessary to help my customers reward their teams and celebrate special moments with special recognition items that are meaningful and memorable," she added.

She's received recognition herself, including two Gold Obelisk awards from the association as Small Business Retailer of the Year in 2012 and Volunteer of the Year in 2017. The Gold Obelisk is the highest award presented by the association.

Higginbotham is a charter member and past president of the Apex Sunrise Rotary Club. During the pandemic she used equipment and resources from her business to create thousands of face shields and masks for health care professionals and others needing protective gear through an initiative she called *Halos for Heroes*.

Born in New York City, Higginbotham grew up in Puerto Rico and moved to the Triangle to attend Duke University in Durham. She graduated in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts in public policy and never left the area.

She lives in Cary with her husband Jeff, co-owner and vice president of FiveStar Awards & Engraving, and their border collie Megan. She has one daughter Lily, who is a sophomore at Western Carolina University.

Learn more at [www.fivestarawards.net](http://www.fivestarawards.net) and [www.awardspersonalization.org](http://www.awardspersonalization.org)

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**Photo caption:** Lisa Higginbotham, CRM, owner of FiveStar Awards & Engraving in Cary, N.C., is the 2021 president of the Awards and Personalization Association, an international group representing retailers and suppliers of awards and recognition items.