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Palmer Lucky Leads Five Award Winners at the Orange County Business Journal's 18th Annual Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards

IRVINE, CA— Tuesday, March 12, marked the Orange County Business Journal's annual **Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards**. The program, in its 18th year, honored five of Orange County's top business leaders for their entrepreneurial spirit and success. The program is designed to celebrate individuals who, by their creativity and determination, have established and nurtured successful business ventures.

Hosted by the Orange County Business Journal and Diamond Sponsor Fifth Third Bank, the program acknowledged the business accomplishments of 92 nominees. Bob Olson, CEO & founder of R.D. Olson Development, delivered the keynote address. A specialist in developing hospitality properties, R.D. Olson is also experienced in the development of office, retail, multifamily and recreational projects. Mr. Olson's longstanding experience as a builder has proven to be highly beneficial for development projects. Bob Olson was named the 2018 Orange County Business Person of the Year by the Orange County Business Journal.

Event Sponsors: Diamond Sponsor Fifth Third Bank; Platinum Sponsors City National Bank, HomeStreet Bank, Jeffrey M. Verdon Law Group LLP, Mechanics Bank, RJI CPAs; Gold Sponsor Irvine Company Office Properties Discovery Park.

Awards were presented to the following entrepreneurs:

American Advisors Group, Orange

Reza Jahangiri, CEO

Reza Jahangiri is the founder and CEO of American Advisors Group (AAG), the nation's leader in reverse mortgage lending and a pioneer in helping older Americans responsibly use their home equity to Retire Better. Jahangiri's vision has been to build on the strength of AAG's nationwide advertising campaign featuring acclaimed actor, Tom Selleck, to create the nation's first senior-focused, product-agnostic home-equity-solutions company. American Advisors Group was formed in 2004 and today AAG has over 1,200 employees and six offices across the nation committed to helping older Americans achieve their vision of a better retirement.

Anduril Industries Inc., Irvine

Palmer Luckey, Founder

Palmer Luckey, founder of Oculus VR and Anduril Industries, is inventing technology that keeps America safe and helps those who serve to do their jobs more efficiently, safely and cost-effectively. Anduril is creating innovative technology that can make a real impact and protect those who risk their lives in dangerous situations. Palmer began this journey over a year ago with the sole purpose of committing top technical talent to help those who defend our country to stay safe and out of harm's way. He is also the designer of the Oculus Rift, a virtual reality head-mounted display, and the founder of Oculus VR. Frustrated with the inadequacy and high cost of

the existing HMDs on the market, Palmer began experimenting with his own designs in 2009 at the age of 16. In 2012, he formed Oculus VR, which was acquired two years later by Facebook for \$2.3 billion.

H. Hendy Associates, Newport Beach

Heidi Hendy, Managing Principal

Heidi Hendy launched H. Hendy Associates in 1979 to drive innovation in the field of interior architecture and planning. Under Hendy's leadership, the firm has become a leading industry force as one of Interior Design Magazine's Top 200 Architecture Firms for 32 consecutive years. In 2019, with \$10 million in revenue and 25 percent year-over-year growth, H. Hendy Associates will commemorate a significant milestone – its 40th anniversary. Hendy has led the firm to become one of the longest-standing women-owned interior architect companies locally, creating a lasting legacy for the Orange County business community.

Salas O'Brien, Santa Ana

Darin Anderson, CEO

When Darin Anderson and partners Chuck O'Neal and Paul Silva acquired an 85 percent share of Salas O'Brien in 2006, the firm's revenue was a healthy \$4.8 million. Under his leadership, revenue doubled in the first two years and the firm was listed on the MEP Giants list for the first time, coming in at No. 97. Anderson led the first successful merger in 2012, bringing on additional business units in Northern California and Seattle. He retained the original leadership of the acquired firms in order to maintain a local, entrepreneurial focus while creating a national presence. Since then, he has expanded that national presence through eight additional mergers, resulting in the growth of the firm to 19 offices, more than 110 registered professionals, and more than 550 employees. At nearly \$100 million in annual revenue and more than \$3.5 billion in construction volume, Salas O'Brien continues to grow and flourish under Anderson's leadership.

United Capital Financial Advisers, Newport Beach

Joe Duran, Founder/CEO

Joe Duran built United Capital, which pioneered the financial life management ethos that is catching like wildfire in the financial advice industry, from the ground up in 2006. Today, the firm manages over \$23 billion in client assets and is ranked No. 2 in Barron's 2018 list of Top 40 Independent Financial Advisers. United Capital helps clients see how their money fits into the bigger picture of their lives and has built a suite of technology and gamified tools, like Honest Conversations and MoneyMind, empowering clients to understand their own goals. United Capital has experienced tremendous growth through the acquisition of firms seeking to modernize their practice, and through FinLife Partners, offering United Capital's proprietary technology to independent third-party advisors. Since its inception in 2016, FinLife Partners has grown to \$23 billion in assets under contract.

About The Orange County Business Journal

The Orange County Business Journal is the weekly read that connects the Orange County business community. This is where the community does in the most vibrant slice of the Southern California economy keep tabs on each other. With one of the highest circulations of all the Business Journals in the country, it continues to grow as a highly impactful and influential publication. More information on the Orange County Business Journal can be found at www.ocbj.com, or by calling 949-833-8373.

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