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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



### **Westown Association Hosts 2019 Annual Meeting**

*Westown Association reflects on accomplishments in 2019 and looks ahead at what's to come*

**MILWAUKEE** – 2019 was a big year for Westown, but 2020 is about to be even bigger. At Tuesday's Annual Meeting, sponsored by [Visit Milwaukee](#), Westown Association celebrated what was an exciting year for the neighborhood, especially along W. Wisconsin Ave. Held at [HUB640](#), the former Boston Store building, over 100 guests attended as Westown Association elected leaders, announced annual award winners and previewed what lies ahead for the organization and community in 2020.

Four members were re-elected for a three-year term to the Westown Board of Directors, including **Joan Johnson** of the [Milwaukee Public Library](#), **George Meyer** of [Kahler Slater Architects](#), **Raj Saha** of the [Milwaukee Bucks](#) and **Jim Vaillancourt** of [MidAmerica Group](#).

Westown Association also recognized individuals that have positively impacted both the organization and neighborhood- some through many years of commitment and others for just a short time. Here are the recipients of this year's Westown Achievement Awards:

**Outstanding Member Award** – Presented to [DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Milwaukee Downtown](#) for being a dedicated Westown member and BID property owner by volunteering at and contributing to several of Westown's events.

**Community Partner Award** – Presented to [Marquette University](#) for being an active and involved Westown member since its inception. Between their sponsorship contributions, BID assessments and being an advocate for the neighborhood, Marquette truly lives up to their tagline, "Be the Difference."

**Debra Usinger Service Award** – Established in 2012 after Debra's passing, this award has been given to individuals who worked with Debra in reaching the goal of making Westown a better place. This year's recipient, **Joan Bartels Farrell**, served on the Westown and BID 5 board of directors since 1999. During this time Joan held all positions of leadership on the board, and was an avid volunteer, sponsor and supporter of Westown events.

**Westown Champion Award** – Presented to **Alex Lasry**, Senior Vice President of the Milwaukee Bucks, for his efforts in keeping the Bucks in Milwaukee through solidifying the construction of Fiserv Forum, Westown's newest gathering place. Lasry also played a

key role in securing Milwaukee's bid to host the 2020 DNC which will put a national spotlight on Milwaukee next summer.

**Westown Champion Award** – Presented to **Mayor Tom Barret** and **Steve Chernof** of Godfrey & Kahn for their leadership and commitment that helped shift perceptions and jump start the renaissance that is now unfolding on W. Wisconsin Ave. Through their efforts, the Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee Development Corporation was formed, which helped set the stage for over \$1 billion in recently completed, under construction and proposed projects, including the expansion of the convention center and streetcar extension.

Guest speakers from the [Milwaukee 2020 Host Committee](#), **Lafayette L. Crump**, Vice President of Diversity, Vendor Accountability and Growth, and **Neisha Blandin**, Vice President of Engagement and Opportunity discussed the expected \$200 million in economic impact the DNC will have on the city, as well as the importance for the citizens of Milwaukee to be involved in the convention as volunteers, vendors and advocates.

**Rocky Marcoux**, Commissioner of the Department of City Development, made a special announcement at the end of the meeting, sending Westown into 2020. Adding to the recent surge in investments in Westown, developer **Scott Lurie** of [F Street Group](#) has an agreement to purchase the vacant Assurant Health building at 501 W. Michigan St. In 2018, Lurie completed the development of [The 42](#) which also resides in Westown.

*The Westown Association is the business improvement district focused on championing the economic and social development of the central business district west of the Wisconsin River. We accomplish this through special event marketing, business resources, growth initiatives and public/private partnerships that improve the quality of life and vitality of the district. For more information, please visit [westown.org](http://westown.org).*

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