

2026 Gillian Rudd Advocacy Award



Gillian Rudd was NAWBO's national president who, together with other early NAWBO advocates, led the charge to educate and influence elected officials about the undeniable impact women-owned businesses played in the U.S. economy. Their efforts led to the authoring of landmark legislation—The Women's Business Ownership Act, or HR5050—and shaped our #NAWBOVOICE that's so widely respected today.

The Gillian Rudd Award honors a NAWBO woman business owner who, like Gillian, has made a significant contribution to the status and visibility of women-owned firms. She advocates for the advancement of the woman business owner community in a bipartisan spirit. She is also a voice of collaboration in effectively presenting or moving forward legislation, regulatory reforms or new initiatives.

Award Criteria

- Must be a NAWBO Premier, Basic, or NextGen member with an active status.
- Must be able to attend the Annual Awards Celebration at the NAWBO Days Conference, May 31, 2026, to accept the award
- Paid staff or contractors (i.e. W2, full time and part time, or 1099) employed by a chapter are not eligible for nomination.
- National Board of Director members are not eligible to be nominated for one full calendar year (January-December) following the year they complete their Board term.



Proclamation of Gillian Rudd Day, Long Island, New York



NAWBO Proclamation from New York City Mayor Koch in 1988

Nominating Questions

- Describe how the nominee advocates for and positively impacts the women business owner community through efforts to influence policy and legislation at local, regional or national levels.
- List specific examples of how the nominee demonstrates activities in the spirit of bipartisanship.
- Describe how the nominee, over time, has consistently engaged in volunteer efforts beyond professional responsibilities to propel women into greater economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide.
- Please list the NAWBO National events, virtual or in-person, the nominee has attended.

NOTE: We strongly encourage the participation of the nominee in completing the application if not self-nominating. This ensures as much detail and information as possible is included for a robust nomination.



2025
Terry Bradley Dunn

Past Gillian Rudd Award Winners

- 2023** – Carnela Renee Hill
- 2022** – Ann Freedman
- 2021** – Irene Natividad
- 2020** – Edie Fraser
- 2019** – Jill Calabrese Bain

- 2018** – Dr. Patricia Greene
- 2017** – Monica Smiley
- 2016** – Laura Yamanaka
- 2010** – Dr. Terry Neese

Key Dates and Judging Criteria

We encourage those nominating to send up to 4 supporting documents to contests@nawbo.org by February 20, 2026. These documents should further demonstrate why this nominee is the best candidate for the award.

Judges may not be familiar with the nominee’s advocacy service. Therefore, information provided should be as clear and as specific as possible. Judges will consider each nomination based on the following criteria:

The nominee...

- Advocates for and positively impacts the women business owner (WBO) community through efforts to influence policy and legislation at local, regional, or national levels.
- Demonstrates the spirit of bipartisanship.
- Engages in volunteer efforts beyond professional responsibilities to propel women into greater economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide.
- Is present and engaged with members and advocacy efforts through attendance at NAWBO’s national in-person and/or virtual events.

The award recipient will be notified of selection the week of April 12, 2026.

Award Recipient Receives

- Complimentary NAWBO Days Conference registration
- Honored on stage during NAWBO Days at the NAWBO Awards Celebration
- Profile article in *NAWBO ONE* e-publication
- National exposure on NAWBO social media and communication channels
- Customized press release announcing award selection to send to local market

**The nominations period for this award is
January 5–February 20, 2026.**

NOMINATE TODAY!

Click here for more information



NAWBO

National Association of Women Business Owners

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nawbo.org

