

## Four Businesses Receive Prestigious International Award for Marketplace Ethics: New BBB Student Ethics Award Recognizes Five Young Ethical Leaders



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ARLINGTON, Va., Sept. 22 /PRNewswire/ -- The Council of Better Business Bureaus today announced the winners of the 2005 Better Business Bureaus' International Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics and the first annual BBB International Student Ethics Award.

### BBB International Torch Award

The 2005 BBB International Torch winners were selected by an independent panel of judges. This year's winners are:

- \* Owens & Minor, Inc. (Glen Allen, VA);
- \* Air Tractor, Inc. (Olney, TX);
- \* Integrated Project Management Company, Inc. (Burr Ridge, IL); and,
- \* Regency Wallcraft, Inc. (Newark, OH).

Advanced Technology Services (Peoria, IL); American Career Executives (Phoenix, AZ); Gentle Giant Moving Company, Inc. (Somerville, MA); and, Marrokal Construction Company (Lakeside, CA) received honorable mention distinction.

"The BBB International Torch Award celebrated today 10 years of honoring ethical businesses that adhere to high standards of behavior in good times and bad, do well by doing right, and serve their customers, employees, investors, competitors and the communities in which they do business, with distinction. These winners have set an example for businesses of all sizes to follow, and we applaud their unique contributions to upholding a fair and honest marketplace," said Ken Hunter, president and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus.

### About the Winners:

Owens & Minor, Inc., Glen Allen, Virginia (medical and supplies distribution)

Established in 1882, Owens & Minor has created an enduring culture that focuses on customer service, integrity and social responsibility. It believes in treating its employees well and they in turn provide customers, suppliers and business partners with superior service. OM employees start each day by focusing on business integrity, using the insights gained from a century in healthcare to create the innovation that distinguishes the company. To assist in employee growth and development, structured training programs are offered in every area of the business through the Owens & Minor University. The company provides financial support to more than 100 organizations in the Richmond area. OM was ranked the number one company in America for the way it uses its technology by Information Week 500 magazine. The company was the winner of BBB/Richmond's 2004 Torch Award for Marketplace Integrity.

Air Tractor, Inc., Olney, Texas (Manufacturers -- Crop Dusters)

Founded in 1958, Air Tractor attributes its success to the attention it gives to customer suggestions, requests, complaints and industry trends. As a result, it has designed, refined and improved new and better aircraft to meet each customer's needs. Treating customers fairly is an important goal at Air

Tractor. On occasions, the company has taken a financial loss on a warranty, item, repair or modification to satisfy a customer. The company is highly respected by its business partners and vendors. It has earned the reputation of being one of the area's top employers. Professional and positive advertising has been a great benefit to its sales. The company has been repeatedly recognized by the community and industry peers for its financial and leadership support. Air Tractor received the BBB/Wichita Falls 2004 Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics.

Integrated Project Management Company, Inc., Burr Ridge, IL (Project Management Consulting)

Since 1988, Integrated Project Management Company has operated from a foundation of ethical leadership in the business consulting world with the astounding result of 90 percent repeat business. Its outstanding training and mentoring programs promote opportunities for advancement and help develop the talents and abilities of its employees. The company offers a superior benefits package for all employees and their families. Its commitment to fair and honest conduct in the marketplace can be illustrated through its money back guarantee, which is offered to clients who are not fully satisfied with its services. To date, no client has invoked the guarantee. Its staff members volunteer time, donate money and provide labor to numerous community projects. The company won the 2004 BBB/Chicago Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics.

Regency Wallcraft, Inc., Newark, OH (Wallcovering)

Founded over 14 years ago, this one-man operation is committed to providing the highest quality service and workmanship in the wallcovering industry. Owner James Turner's business approach is to always go beyond the agreed scope of work, giving his clients 110 percent and doing the little things that are often overlooked in the construction and remodeling industry. These include job site cleanliness and order, punctuality and personal consideration. The company offers a written warranty on all work performed. It maintains the highest standards regarding its marketing and advertising materials. It has been involved in numerous charity projects, donating both labor and materials. The company has received local and national recognition for its dedication to excellence in craftsmanship and customer service and was awarded the 2004 Business Integrity Award by BBB/Columbus, Ohio.

In addition to the four winners and four honorable mentions, two businesses were selected as finalists in the 2005 international competition: Mike Graham's Heating and Air Conditioning of Burkburnett, TX and Requarth Lumber Company, Dayton, OH.

The panel of judges for the 2005 International Torch Award were:

- \* Dr. Conrad Kasperson, professor, Franklin and Marshall College;
- \* Joan Koebernick, owner, Dakota-K Auto Repair & Tire Center in Arlington Heights, IL [2000 National Torch Award winner]; and,
- \* Ron Miller, senior consultant, BBB of Central Ohio Foundation.

Companies were evaluated against criteria that included commitment to and demonstration of ethical practices in the marketplace; high standards of behavior toward customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders and communities in which they do business; long-term value of ethics policies to shareholders, customers and employees; and training and communications programs to assist employees in carrying out established ethics policies.

For a complete list of winners dating to 1996, the year the BBBs' Torch

Award was established, visit the BBB central Web site at <http://www.bbb.org/BizEthics/winners.asp>.

#### BBB International Student Ethics Award

Five high school students were honored for the inaugural 2005 BBB Student Ethics Award. They are:

- \* Amber Appleton, West Delaware High School, Manchester, Iowa;
- \* David Clay, Mason High School, Mason, Ohio;
- \* Michael Cronin, Galva-Holstein High School, Holstein, Iowa;
- \* Victor Cross, Central High School, Phenix City, Alabama; and,
- \* Nikrad Mahdi, Worthington Kilbourne High School, Worthington, Ohio.

An independent panel of academic and ethics experts selected the winning students, following a careful review of more than 30 entries from throughout the U.S. The students were rated on their leadership, contribution to their communities and schools, personal integrity, academic accomplishment and written essay on "Character Building." Each student will receive a \$2,500 scholarship to an accredited college or university of his or her choice.

"These students are being recognized for their high ethical behavior demonstrated through leadership, community service, and overall personal integrity and academic history. Each student superbly illustrates how conducting yourself with honesty, respect and integrity can lead to success in every area of your life," said Hunter.

"Through the international competition and the many local competitions, the Better Business Bureau system is sending an important message: consistently conducting yourself or your business in an ethical fashion is important and deserving of recognition," said Tom Ryan, chairman of the Council of Better Business Bureaus and formerly senior vice president-law, general counsel and secretary, The Quaker Oats Company.

The panel of judges for the 2005 Student Ethics Award were:

- \* Dr. Jay Bass, director, Student Services, Chantilly High School;
- \* Cheryl Gittens, director, Health Education, Northern Virginia Community College;
- \* Katie Sutliff, character development manager, Ethics Resource Center; and,
- \* Keshia Woods, academic advisor, George Mason University.

The winners for the BBBs' International Torch Award and Student Ethics Award were announced at a special awards ceremony held in conjunction with the International Assembly of Better Business Bureaus in Las Vegas.

**SOURCE Council of Better Business Bureaus**  
**Web Site: <http://www.bbb.org>**

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