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KC Chamber Announces 2019 Athena Award Winners

KANSAS CITY, MO (August 20, 2019) – **Kathy Nelson**, President & CEO of the Greater Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation, has been selected for the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s ATHENA 2019 Leadership Award, and **Caitlin O’Byrne Waters**, Consultant, CBIZ as the 2019 ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award Recipient.

Both women will be honored at the [ATHENA Awards Reception](#), **October 3**, from **5:00 – 7:00 p.m.** at **Municipal Auditorium**, 301 W. 13th St, KCMO, in the Little Theatre. More than 40 women were nominated. An independent group of community leaders made the selections.

The ATHENA Leadership Award is presented to individuals honored for professional excellence, community service, and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills.

The ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award is a natural extension of the ATHENA Leadership Award and is presented to emerging women leaders across professional sectors for exemplary leadership.

About the 2019 ATHENA Award Winners

Kathy Nelson works to promote Kansas City sports locally and nationally with the goal of attracting, retaining and facilitating sports events and organizations. As President & CEO of the Greater Kansas City Sports Commission, she helps the bi-state region realize the economic, social, and community-building benefits of sports. Nelson first joined the KC Sports Commission in August of 2010 as the WIN for KC Director then moved into the role of President & CEO in November 2011. In 2017 she was named by the *Kansas City Business Journal* as one of the [Women Who Mean Business](#). *The Kansas City Star* included Nelson on their list of 20 Most Influential Sports Figures in Kansas City. In November 2017, Nelson and the Sports Commission were honored as Sports Commission of the Year from *Compete Magazine*. In 2018 she received the Sports Tourism Executive/CEO of the Year award, a national honor.



Prior to the KC Sports Commission, Nelson served in senior management roles in marketing, sales and promotions at Time Warner Cable and Metro Sports and held several roles at FOX 4/WDAF-TV in Kansas City including creative services manager, producer, reporter and editor.

Along her career path, Nelson has received numerous Telly, Emmy and cable television awards for television production, specifically sports production. She was the first woman to win a regional Emmy for the production of an NFL game in the early 2000s. She attended Truman State University.

Caitlin O'Byrne Waters, consultant at CBIZ, earned her journalism degree from the University of Missouri in 2011, and recently earned her M.B.A. from Rockhurst University in 2018. Since 2015, Caitlin has served on the Living In Vitality steering committee, which alongside with AdventHealth, develops programming to help women in KC take care of their whole selves. She also serves on the inaugural Lead to Read board, actively working to improve literacy in Kansas City area school and empower students through one-to-one mentorship.



Caitlin also serves on several committees, including the Kansas City Urban Youth Academy's Queens of the Diamond committee, Young Friends of Starlight's After Hours at The Towers committee, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Man/Woman of the Year Campaign and Girls On The Run's annual golf tournament committee.

She is a Centurion, having graduated with the Fall cohort in May 2019. As part of her Centurions experience, Caitlin was able to help organize and participate in the annual Women's Forum, "Together We Rise: Empowering Women to Succeed" and chair the annual benchmarking trip to Austin.

About The Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation

The mission of the [Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation](#) is to drive Kansas City's overall sports strategy, to enrich the quality of life, create economic impact and raise visibility for our region. As a privately-funded nonprofit, we are entirely dependent on your support. For the latest on Kansas City Sports Commission news, follow on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Also follow the Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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