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## Four Diverse Businesses Earn Burns & McDonnell Partner of the Year Award, Scholarships

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Connecting with and supporting diverse businesses contributes to economic growth, innovation and strengthened communities. This is why the [Business Diversity Program](#) at [Burns & McDonnell](#) annually recognizes four small and diverse businesses with an Empowering Diverse Partnerships Partner of the Year award for outstanding project performance and client service. The recognition is a testament to our partners' ongoing commitment to excellence, project performance and client service. It also serves as a symbol of our firms' collective commitment to safety.

“Small and diverse business often have limited access to resources, funding and networks,” says Tammy Martin, Business Diversity Director at Burns & McDonnell. “Our Empowering Diverse Partnerships program is critical because it enables our partners to grow while also helping to create a sustainable market in our supply chain.”

The 2023 Partner of the Year ceremony was held at Burns & McDonnell world headquarters on Jan. 11 as part of the networking and guest speaker event “Honoring Diverse Legacies: A Celebration of Business Diversity and Martin Luther King Jr.”

The companies that received awards, listed with their city and diverse business classification:

- [Infinite Energy Construction \(IEC\)](#) (Kansas City, Missouri): MBE providing electrical contracting to commercial, military, aviation and industrial clients.
- [RW Collins Co.](#) (Chicago, Illinois): WBE providing construction contractors to commercial and residential property clients.
- [Virginia Transformer Corp.](#) (Roanoke, Virginia): MBE providing specialized power transformers, associated equipment and services to customers.
- [Young Management & Consulting](#) (Atlanta, Georgia): MBE providing management and business consulting services across the energy, infrastructure and technology industries.

Along with awards, the four businesses receive a \$5,700 scholarship to the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College for the “Growing an Established Diverse Business” program, which provides training on business growth strategies.

The Jan. 11 event also featured [Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas](#) leading a special Q&A with [Ayana Parsons](#), an award-winning inclusive leadership expert, serial

entrepreneur, public speaker and venture capitalist. Her body of work includes co-founding [Fearless Fund](#), the first venture capital firm for women of color by women of color.

Parsons also co-founded [Yardstick Management](#), the nation's leading Black-owned management consulting firm. Over the years, Parsons has held global leadership roles at the World Economic Forum, Korn Ferry, Heidrick & Struggles, Procter & Gamble, and Kimberly-Clark. A devoted wife and mother, she is also the founder of [AKP Management LLC](#), a leadership consultancy for purpose-driven changemakers, small businesses and corporations.

“Today, few Americans and even fewer women have access to capital and entrepreneurship as a means to generate wealth and transform lives. That must change,” Parsons says. “With my knowledge and experience, my mission is to help ignite change in how we do business and with whom. It’s time to level the playing field and equip the overlooked, the marginalized and the underrepresented with the tools, resources and networks they need to scale their businesses and pursue the American dream.”

Fearless Fund has deployed more than \$30 million in investment capital and includes in its portfolio 41 women-led businesses, including brands like The Lip Bar, Slutty Vegan, Bread Beauty and Hairbrella.

“I was thrilled that Ayana was able to join us and share the great things Fearless Fund is accomplishing because supporting minority-owned businesses promotes a pool of innovation, empathy and growth that has a positive impact on all of us,” says [Leon Harden](#), manager of diversity, equity & inclusion strategy at Burns & McDonnell.

Over the past five years, Burns & McDonnell has had a total business diversity spend of \$2.3 billion and has worked with more than 2,600 small and diverse businesses in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, plus Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and India.

## About Burns & McDonnell

Burns & McDonnell is a family of companies bringing together an unmatched team of more than 13,500 engineers, construction and craft professionals, architects, planners, technologists, and scientists to design and build our critical infrastructure. With an integrated construction and design mindset, we offer full-service capabilities. Founded in 1898 and working from 70 offices globally, Burns & McDonnell is 100% employee-owned. Learn how we are [designed to build](#).