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Foothill Ranch business owner honored as one of O.C.'s best

Event honors top 30 businesswomen in Orange County.

By **ERIKA I. RITCHIE**

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

LAKE FOREST – Jennifer Heinly is one of 30 Orange County business women to be honored on Friday.

Heinly, of Foothill Ranch, was selected by the National Association of Women Business Owners-OC Chapter, for outstanding achievements and recognized as the Professional Communications Exchange's "2008 Member of the Year."

Heinly – who has run her own public relations and marketing firm for 20 years – will join 29 other women who provide leadership to business, trade and civic organizations in Orange County. A luncheon will be held Oct. 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Irvine. NAWBO-OC hosts this annual gala luncheon to recognize local trailblazing female business owners who are making a difference.

Building upon the annual theme of "Reflecting the Star Within Us," NAWBO-OC will also pay tribute to Tammy Taylor for a lifetime of achievement while recognizing Sue Ellen Cooper as a business pioneer and Gina Kay as an entrepreneur to watch.

Q. Why did you choose to go into public relations and marketing?

A. I wanted to be a sports writer and I did sports marketing at the Forum in Inglewood. I decided I wanted to go into public relations and marketing. I went to work for a small PR firm in San Pedro. I worked for some high tech companies. I got an MBA and decided to start my own business in Colorado. That was 20 years ago.

Q. What skill sets make someone in your field successful?

A. Writing. A lot of people want to go into PR because they like people. It's about communication and getting out information. It's our job to help journalists and online media do their job and communicate our clients' products and services.



HONORS: Foothill Ranch resident Jennifer Heinly is one of 30 OC women honored by NAWBO-OC.

COURTESY OF JENNIFER HEINLY

Jennifer Heinly

Age: 48

Occupation: President of J & J Consulting

Hometown: Foothill Ranch

Education: BA, Cal State Fullerton; MBA, Pepperdine University

Family: Husband, John; daughter, Caitlin, 13

Hobbies: Tennis, skiing, watching daughter play in club basketball

Q. What is the most interesting client you've had?

A. When I was 10 years into my business, I started a second company – Sports Strategist. We targeted the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. We had several clients from the lesser publicized sports like wrestling, badminton, archery and fencing that didn't get a lot of sponsorship. It was very exciting helping the athletes promote their sports. It was exciting being involved with the Olympics.

Q. What is the biggest challenge in public relations?

A. Educating clients. Everyone wants instant gratification. PR is really a process where you communicate the message on a constant basis to the target publication. You can't get one article and expect results. There's a misnomer it's all related to contacts. It's important to educate the client not to rely on previous sources. It's researching and finding out what reporters have covered. It's reading newspapers, online bloggers and watching stories on TV. It's doing your due diligence.

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