

ACE Annual Awards Highlights Its 24-Year Legacy of Growing Georgia Businesses

Celebration also honors retiring President & CEO Grace Fricks and welcomes incoming CEO Martina Edwards.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs](#) held its Annual Awards Fundraiser and Dinner on September 19th in Atlanta, celebrating a 24-year legacy of growing Georgia businesses. The event, ACE's largest to date, hosted over 200 attendees at Savanna Hall at Zoo Atlanta. It highlighted strong partnerships with clients, funders, and fellow Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), showcasing entrepreneurial excellence and the significant impact of supporting small businesses on Georgia communities.



Pictured (L-R): Grace Fricks, Dr. Valentine Nzengung, Chris Weaver, Fern Pegus, James Daniel, and Martina Edwards and Martina Edwards

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It was the vision of a more inclusive world that drove our Founder and CEO, Grace C. Fricks to open doors to diverse entrepreneurs. We are incredibly proud of ACE's legacy of impact across Georgia!"

*Andréa R. Chambers, ACE
Assistant Director of Fund
Development*

"It was the vision of a more inclusive world that drove our Founder and CEO, [Grace C. Fricks](#) to open doors to diverse entrepreneurs," said Andréa R. Chambers, ACE Assistant Director of Fund Development who led the team that coordinated the event. "We are incredibly proud of ACE's legacy of impact across Georgia!"

Crystal Edmonson, Broadcast Editor of the Atlanta Business Chronicle, served as the Mistress of Ceremony. The celebration united honorees, special guests, ACE senior management, staff, and board to not only highlight ACE clients and partners, but to also honor Fricks as she retires from her post as President & CEO. Current ACE Chief of Strategic Partnerships, [Martina Edwards](#) was also

welcomed as incoming CEO beginning January 2025.

In addition to the beautiful awards presented, the three client winners each received a \$2,500 scholarship from ACE for their businesses. The honorees were:

- * Commercial Impact Award, presented to: MuniRem Environmental LLC | Dr. Valentine Nzungung
- * Small Business Impact Award, presented to: Bolivar Coffee | Nicolas Jaramillo Angel
- * The Ripple Effect Award, presented to: Dragon Academy | Fern Pegus

A new award was also introduced in honor of ACE President and CEO, Grace Fricks. The Grace C. Fricks Founder's Award is given to an ACE business owner, partner, or volunteer, past or present, who has made an exceptional impact on building entrepreneurship and strengthening communities by supporting others beyond themselves. This year's Grace C. Fricks Founder's Award honoree was James Daniel of App Studios in Dahlonge, GA.

The J. Alton Wingate Economic Partnership Award is presented to a partner that plays a significant role in ACE's impact story. This year, The Rockefeller Foundation was honored with the Wingate Award in recognition of its donations to ACE totaling \$6 million, which helped ACE deploy \$14.4 million in loan capital to underserved borrowers, enabling clients to save more than \$865,000 in interest. The award was received by Chris Weaver, Executive Director of the Economic Coalition of The Rockefeller Foundation.

The ACE Awards presenters and speakers included:

- * William Zawrotny, JD, Jones Day, ACE Board Chair
- * Glenn Bachman, Financial Advisor, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- * Sandy Headley, Vice President, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- * Marietta Murton, Small Business Loan Officer- Hispanic Initiative, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs



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Martina Edwards and Grace Fricks

- * Martina Edwards, Chief of Strategic Partnerships, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- * Grace Fricks, MBA, President & CEO, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs

Event sponsors included:

- * Founders Circle: Piedmont Bank
- * Impact: Georgia Power and Southern Company
- * Champion: The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, JP Morgan Chase & Company, PNC Bank, Wells Fargo
- * Access: Bank of America, Fifth Third Bank, Living Stories, Northern Trust, South State Bank, Travelers Insurance
- * Supporters and Friends: Capital Partners Certified Development Company, Fulton County Economic Development

All of the videos showcased at the event are available on ACE's YouTube Channel ->

<https://www.youtube.com/@ACE.AccessstoCapital/videos>.

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Nancy Howard

ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs Inc.

+1 470-615-1288

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