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## **Nikki Storey: 2022 Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year**

**MINNEAPOLIS** — Nikki Storey, President of the Great Lakes Boat Building School has been named the 2022 Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year, announced the MRAA Educational Foundation. The Award was presented to Storey, the thirty-sixth recipient, as part of the Dealer Week Award’s Luncheon on Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> in Austin, Texas.

Nikki didn’t grow up in the boating industry or on the water, but as the “Can Do Kid”, an endearing label her grandfather Otto gave her, she’s making waves far beyond her small-town Michigan roots. As President of the Great Lakes Boat Building School (GLBBS) since 2020, she leads a team of professionals committed to providing students with exceptional, hands-on instruction focused on developing the broad knowledge and skills required for careers in the maritime industry. The school’s mission is to “prepare students for rewarding careers in the marine industry” with the vision “to be the leader in marine workforce development”. The school has posted a 100% graduate employer placement rate for the past five-years.

A native of Pickford, Michigan, Nikki graduated from Lake Superior State University with a BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Management and Human Resources. Her professional career began at her university and later at War Memorial Hospital. Since setting sail at GLBBS in 2015, she hasn’t looked back, quickly rising from Business Manager to Executive Director a year later, to her current leadership role. She championed the school through a national accreditation process which facilitated Federal Title IV, HEA financial aid opportunities for students, added the Marine Service Technology program in 2019 and forging a partnership with Mercury University to offer Mercury Marine Service Certification. In addition, GLBBS now offers the opportunity to test for ABYC Certifications along with teaching the hands-on skills development component.

Her goals moving forward are to continue to expand industry relationships with manufacturers, dealers and marinas as well as to seek more GLBBS students by expanding the facility and doubling their ability to prepare students for the marine industry and building an enhanced pipeline of talent.

In her application, Nikki shared, “This is the most positive impact our school can have – transforming students’ lives and helping to address the biggest challenge the marine industry is currently facing now and in the long-term.”

The Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year Award is named after the late Darlene Briggs of Wayzata, Minn., who was admired for her tireless dedication to the marine industry. The MRAA and *Boating Industry* magazine together present the award to honor her memory. It is presented annually to an outstanding woman who is actively involved in the marine industry at any level. It recognizes long and devoted service, untiring commitment, and the advancement of women in the marine business.

“Nikki Storey’s commitment to the advancement of the marine industry makes her an obvious choice for this year’s Darlene Briggs Marine Woman of the Year Award”, said Jeff Siems, Chairman of the MRAA Educational Foundation Board of Directors.

#### **About MRAA Educational Foundation**

As part of its mission to create a strong and healthy boating industry, the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas is committed to offering training, education and professional development opportunities to its members and the entire marine dealer community. In 2004, the association launched the MRAA Educational Foundation, a not-for-profit 501(c) 3 corporation, to provide financial support for education, training, and professional development in the recreational marine trades. For more information or to donate to support the foundation’s mission, visit [www.marineedfoundation.org](http://www.marineedfoundation.org)

#### **About the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas**

At the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA), we believe that for the marine industry to thrive, the companies that interact with the boater in their community must thrive. Those businesses determine the boater’s experience and are the leading factor in the industry’s success. MRAA works to create a strong and healthy boating industry by uniting those businesses, providing them with opportunities for improvement and growth, and representing them with a powerful voice. For more information, visit [MRAA.com](http://MRAA.com).

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