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## **Alchemy Awards Honor Area's Top PR Professionals**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MADISON (October 24, 2008)—The stars of public relations shone brightly last night at the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Madison chapter's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Alchemy Awards. The ceremony celebrated the hard work and creativity of the area's top public relations professionals during 2007.

Keynote speaker John Nichols kicked off the night's event by addressing the crowd about the evolution of media and the role public relations professionals face with these changes. Nichols is the editorial page editor of the *Capital Times* and a nationally known political writer and blogger who contributes his writing to the *Progressive* and *In These Times*. A seasoned journalist, he discussed the *Capital Times*' transition to an online daily newspaper as well as his views on the future of journalism and social media.

Nichols was also on hand to present awards to the night's winners. Brescia Cassellius received the PRSA Scholarship for her hard work and dedication while attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Receiving top honors in the Alchemy category were:

- Business/Consumer Campaign – Hiebing: Power of Nutrition
- Newsletter – AnchorBank: EmploE-News
- **Innovative Use of New Communication Vehicles – Busalacchi Communications, LLC: White Coast Wisdom Podcast;** St. Mary's Hospital: Total Knee Replacement Webcast

Closing out the show was the Communicator of the Year Award honoring this year's winner, Barbara Hernandez, public relations Director for Heibing. With nearly 30 years of experience, Hernandez brings a wide range of expertise to her clients who include The Swiss Colony, American Family Insurance and General Casualty. She has developed and implemented award-winning strategic communications campaigns and goes the distance for each client by immersing herself into the industry. Barbara received her APR in 1990 and is past president of the Madison chapter of PRSA and a third time board member. She works closely with other Wisconsin

chapters and has devoted countless hours mentoring PRSSA students, speaking and conducting workshops.