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PRESS RELEASE

Release Date: February 23, 2004
Contact: Kelly McLeod, Marketing Specialist, kmcleod@uwf.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Florida SBDC 2004 Small Business Dividend\$ Award Recognizes the Contributions of Nationally-Based Small Business Champion – Johnnie L. Albertson



Ms. Johnnie L. Albertson

Pensacola: The Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) Network implemented the **Annual Capitol Briefing & Reception** in March 2000 as a new and exciting way to brief the Florida Congressional Delegation on the impact of federal funding in support of the Florida economy. Of particular importance is the impact in each member's district on the small business community. The event also provides networking and partnership opportunities. A distinctive element of the event is the acknowledgment of a Floridian whose service to the state has included strong support of small business. Past **Small Business Dividend\$ Award** winners are Senator Bob Graham in 2003; Congressman Bill Young in 2002; Senator Connie Mack in 2001; Congressman Andy Ireland in 2000.

The **5th Annual Capitol Briefing & Reception** will be held on Wednesday, March 24. Departing from the policy of honoring notable Floridians who have demonstrated their support of small business in significant and diverse ways, the 2004 honoree is Ms. Johnnie L. Albertson. Well known on the Hill and in the states, Johnnie is best known for her untiring support of small businesses everywhere. Ms. Albertson receives the **Small Business Dividend\$ Award** on the 24th at the Reception, 5:30- 8:00 PM, in the wonderful Florida House on Capitol Hill.

Ms. Albertson was selected to head SBA's Office of Small Business Training in 1976. She received the Agency's Silver Medal for her work in designing and implementing a national training program for women entrepreneurs. Working with the Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the community college national network, she implemented the program nationally and trained women in business planning and marketing. More than 30,000 women were trained in an 18-month period.

In 1980, she was selected for the SBA's first Senior Executive Candidate program; in 1982, she became SBA's first woman career Senior Executive. As a qualifying project for the Senior Executive Service, Ms. Albertson created the model for SBA's widely acclaimed District Director training program. In recognition of her contribution to SBA's field operations, Ms. Albertson was the first recipient of SBA's Lifetime Achievement Award. This award was created by SBA's District Directors in 1998.

She became the first Associate Administrator for the Small Business Development Center program in 1982. The SBDC program grew from 17 SBDCs serving approximately 75,000 small businesses in 1982 (located predominantly in the Northeast) to 63 lead centers with more than 1,200 centers operating in every state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Working collaboratively with state governments, educational institutions and economic development organizations, the SBDC program is now an outstanding national resource for small businesses. The SBDCs assist an average of 600,000 small businesses annually. Over 9.5 million small businesses have been served since 1982. Ms. Albertson has single-handedly helped small business more than any other. She resides in Washington, DC and is active in business and historical organizations in her Capitol Hill community.

For additional information about the **Capitol Briefing & Reception**, please contact Kelly McLeod at kmcleod@uwf.edu or Dr. Dianne Barlar at dbarlar@uwf.edu.

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A statewide service network partially funded by the US SBA and administered by the University of West Florida

