



## ANGEL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

### **ANGEL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES BREAKING NEWS LIVE FROM THE ACA SUMMIT** *Angel Trends and Coveted Industry Awards Revealed*

**April 15, 2015, San Diego, CA** – Today the Angel Capital Association (ACA), the world's leading professional association for angel investors, announced breaking news live from the 2015 ACA Summit, where the world's largest gathering of angels is meeting to share angel investing tips, strategies and deal flow trends.

- Today ACA Chairman David Verrill highlighted statistics and predictions from a 2015 survey of member angel group leaders.
- Winners of the highly coveted Hans Severiens and Luis Villalobos Awards were announced.
- Philadelphia was named the host city of the 2016 ACA Summit.

Reflecting on ACA's 10 year history as a barometer of angel investor industry changes, ACA Chairman David Verrill presented these trends from a 2015 survey of ACA angel group leaders:

- More than 95% of ACA members meet "financial sophistication" levels: ACA members bring corporate leadership and education experience, hold certifications and continue their education through professional meetings and seminars.
- ACA angel groups are growing in size: Today groups average 68 angels, and 63 percent of the groups grew in membership last year.
- Expansion in investment geographies: ACA preferred investment show a pronounced evolution from mostly local in 2008 to mostly regional or national in 2015.
- ACA angel member optimism: ACA group leaders are optimistic for 2015; 59 percent predict activity increases in dollars and investment rounds compared to 2014.

The recipient of the coveted Hans Severiens Award for 2015 is Susan Preston. Named after Dr. Hans Severiens, a founder of the angel group movement and Band of Angels of Menlo Park, Calif., who also helped found ACA. The award, given annually by ACA, the Angel Resource Institute (ARI) and sponsored by [Seedrs](#), an online platform for discovering and investing in great startups, honors the one individual whose actions advance the role of angel investing, expand entrepreneurship and benefit the angel investing industry as a whole. About Ms. Preston, ACA Chairman Emeritus and selection committee chair John Huston stated, "Susan has been a presence to watch in the angel investing ecosystem for decades and shows no signs of stopping. Beyond being an investor and advisor to entrepreneurs, she is a mentor to all angel investors and a true leader for the expansion of women in the field."

Like many angels, Susan is advancing angel investing with a passion for her work as the Managing Partner for the new Seattle Angel Fund and is committed to fostering entrepreneurial growth in the Pacific Northwest through early-stage investments. She is also General Partner for the CalCEF Clean

Energy Angel Fund, which focuses on seed/start-up stage investments in clean energy technology. Susan teaches in the MBA program and is the Buerk Endowed Fellow for Entrepreneurship at the University of Washington. She also serves as co-chair and lead instructor for the Angel Resource Institute, a global education organization for investors and entrepreneurs. Susan has been named as one of the Managers and a Board member for the new Element 8 Angel Fund, a Seattle-based clean-tech investing angel group. In 2014 Susan received the Small Business Person of the Year award from the Small Business Council of America and the Senator Cantwell Women of Valor award. More about Susan's accomplishments and views on angel investing is [here](#).

Winner of the [Luis Villalobos Award](#), honoring the most innovative ACA angel invested company, is Ann Arbor, Mich.-based [RetroSense Therapeutics](#), a biotech developing life-enhancing gene therapies designed to restore vision in patients suffering from blindness due to specific ailments. Sarah Dickey, ACA Membership Director Sarah Dickey stated, "RetroSense Therapeutics is a well-deserved winner. Its innovations could make a huge difference in the lives of those blinded with retinal disorders. Interestingly, the company is also a great example of collaboration among early stage investors as it benefited from cross-country syndication with multiple ACA member groups."

RetroSense Therapeutics CEO Sean Ainsworth stated, "It's really exciting and an honor to win the Villalobos Award, which highlights some of the amazing innovations that can come to life through the power of angel investing. Our angel-backed series A, of \$7 million, has enabled us to complete studies needed to enter clinical trials and will fund early clinical development. It's great to have the recognition from ACA for the progress we're making toward restoring vision.

Finally, the 2016 ACA Summit was confirmed for May 9-11 in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. ACA chose Philadelphia because of the high ACA membership concentration in Philadelphia and its surrounds, coupled with the ability to leverage the incredible community support, strong startup ecosystem and availability of prominent local keynoters. ACA Executive Director Marianne Hudson stated, "Our objective is to select a location that will enable the ACA Summit to continue as the gold standard of angel professionalism and to connect with active angel investors. Philadelphia will be a fantastic host city given the strong civic support and economic development engine that punctuates a stellar startup ecosystem of universities, incubators, accelerators and a thriving foundation of active angel investors providing excellent corporate connections and integration."

### **About the Angel Capital Association (ACA)**

The [Angel Capital Association](#) is the world's leading professional and trade association focused on fueling the success of accredited angel investors and portfolio companies in high-growth, early-stage ventures. ACA is the voice of the angel industry, providing comprehensive services in support of members working in angel groups, through portals and individually. ACA provides professional development, public policy advocacy and significant benefits and resources to its membership of more than 12,000 individual accredited investors from every American state and five Canadian provinces. [www.angelcapitalassociation.org](http://www.angelcapitalassociation.org); @ACAAngelCapital; #ACAAngelSummit.

ACA is aligned with the **Angel Resource Institute** (ARI), a 501c3 charitable foundation focused on increasing the effectiveness and availability of financial and mentor capital to entrepreneurs and early stage and angel investors. ARI provides education, training, publications (ARI Halo Report) investment data, and information on best practices related to the earliest stages of angel investing and new venture development. [www.angelresourceinstitute.org](http://www.angelresourceinstitute.org)

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