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Opportunity Bank CEO Laura Clark Honored with 2024 Pathmaker Award by YWCA Helena

HELENA – Opportunity Bank of Montana today announced CEO/President Laura Clark received YWCA Helena’s 2024 Pathmaker award during a ceremony on April 10 to champion her achievements in the financial industry and highlight her success in mentoring other women in the banking sector.

"Laura has broken glass ceilings in the financial industry and has lifted other women up with her to succeed," said YWCA Helena Executive Director Jenifer Gursky, who presented the award. **"I deeply believe it is supporters like Opportunity Bank that have helped us [YWCA] get to where we are today through a decade of support."**

The award pays tribute to women who have broken boundaries, shattered glass ceilings and made paths for other women to succeed. "She is a mentor to those in her sector and community and, in doing so, has created a path for others to dare greatly in their own path-making legacy," according to the award.

Clark, who assumed the role of CEO of Opportunity Bank in January 2023, and President in April 2022, has spent her entire career in the banking industry, spanning over 40 years, including a variety of executive positions, previously holding the bank’s Chief Financial Officer position. She is one of the few female bank CEOs in Montana, and the first woman to hold the position for Opportunity Bank.

Mary Rutherford, President and CEO of the Montana Community Foundation, nominated Clark for the award, highlighting her accomplishments in the banking industry and her mentorship of women in the profession throughout her career.

"While there are many women working on the front lines in the banking profession, Laura has broken the executive barrier for women at the executive level of banking," said Rutherford in her nomination letter. **"Banking has historically been a male-dominated profession, yet Laura’s rise to the top makes visible the opportunities women have to reach their full potential in this industry."**

Clark’s award will be highlighted at YWCA Helena’s upcoming Empowered event on April 16, which will pay tribute to the accomplishments of women in the Helena area.

"I am truly speechless and honored to be awarded," said Clark. **"We are proud to continue our decades-long support of the mission and work of the YWCA Helena to help our community thrive. Empowerment is a value that both of our organizations share."**



YWCA Helena Executive Director Jenifer Gursky (left) presents Opportunity Bank CEO/President Laura Clark (right) with the 2024 Pathmaker Award on April 10, 2024.

Clark holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from MSU-Billings. She works out of the bank's headquarters in Helena. She is also a graduate of Leadership Montana and currently serves on the board of ExplorationWorks, Montana Independent Bankers, and the Rotary Club of Helena.

“Laura’s the consummate story of a small-town girl who has risen to a point that young women can point to as an example of what’s possible,” Rutherford said.

About Opportunity Bank of Montana

Proudly the fourth-largest Montana-based bank, Opportunity Bank of Montana offers customers a full range of banking services. With a more than century-long commitment to its customers and surrounding communities, Opportunity Bank's mission is to provide strong financial futures for Montanans. Member FDIC.

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