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Opterus Awards Winners of Year 2 of the Annual ‘Rebel with a Cause’ Scholarships to Spotlight the Accomplishments of Young Women

Toronto –Sept 1, 2020 – [Opterus](#) Inc., the leading global provider of cost-effective, web-based store communications and task management solutions, announced their second year winners for their annual scholarship awards that are inspired by and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Helen McKilligin and Valerie Ann Hawkins, the mother and sister of Janet Hawkins, founder of Opterus. The scholarships are open for women between the ages of 16-28 and enrolled/will enroll at a Canadian post-secondary institution, who are pursuing a STEM, the Helen Rose Award or an Arts, Valerie Ann Award, educational path. Each scholarship winner is awarded \$10K CND.

“I am incredibly pleased that we are in a position where Opterus can help these incredible young women. This award is a significant amount that really can change a life,” said Janet Hawkins, President and CEO, Opterus Inc. “This year we made it a global scholarship as long as the applicants were going to attend a Canadian institution. Opterus is a global company with customers in 49 countries around the world and we thought it would be great to open it up to such an incredibly diverse group of young women. It was tough to choose a winner among so many deserving applicants, but I feel we picked two women who really encompass the spirit of the awards.”

The 2020 Scholarship Winners are:

The Opterus Helen Rose STEM Award was given to Robin Doucet. “Being chosen as the winner of this scholarship I still don’t fully believe it. It feels as though a weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I will truly be able to focus on my studies and my son,” said Robin. “I will forever be grateful for the wonderful gift.” Robin will be attending Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada to pursue a Bachelor of Science (Nursing). She is a young mother and welcomes the challenge of becoming a nurse. In her words, “Being a nurse is so much more than giving medications and checking vitals. It is learning about the patient and being accepting of their qualities, it is forming a bond and having them be comfortable with you to give the best care as possible.”

The Opterus Valerie Ann Arts Award was given to Reem (Karimeh) Mahmood. “I am really crying at the moment,” said Reem. “Sometimes it’s not only about our hard-work, sleepless nights, and doing our best. I have been working on myself to become a pioneer feminist activist in my country since 2016, and I became one. Now, I got over the financial obstacle, and despite the fact that I am a lower-middle-class young woman, I will be able to study my dream program (Gender and women’s studies) at my dream University.” Reem will be attending York University in Toronto, Canada to study Gender and Women’s studies. As a feminist activist, this program will give her new tools and academic perspective to understand and analyze women situation in Syria where she currently lives. “This scholarship will transform my life, to move from a war survivor, scared feminist activist to an empowered woman who will use her privileges to help other women and enhance the feminist scene in her region.”

About Dr. McKilligin

Helen led a groundbreaking life. She graduated from the University of Aberdeen in 1958 with a specialty in pediatrics. She was a published author, writing a book with pioneering insights into the principles of neonatal nursing in 1970. She practiced in Newfoundland at the Grace Hospital and taught as an associate professor at the medical school at Memorial University in Newfoundland. She helped form the first Family Planning Association of Newfoundland that opened a birth control centre in St. John’s, which was the first of its kind in the province. In 1980 she moved the family to Ontario and worked for the ministry of health creating



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groundbreaking programs in reproductive health. Before retiring she also completed her fine arts degree at the OCAD University. The Helen Rose STEM Award is dedicated to her memory.

About Valerie Hawkins

Valerie lived with ovarian cancer for 5 years but passed away in February 2019. She was in New York during 9/11 doing what she loved as a member of the cast of Rag Time on Broadway. I believe her cancer made her one more victim of that day. She was an incredible actor and a brilliant director. She was a part of so many productions, Les Miserables - the North American tour, Romeo and Juliet in Stratford, Anne of Green Gables in PEI and one of my favorites, Star Mites, an off-Broadway production in NYC, just to name a few. She graduated from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and received the Lorne Greene Award for outstanding achievement in the practical and performing aspects of theatre while at Queen's. She also loved to rock and roll and sang in a local band in Stratford, Ontario. The Valerie Ann Arts Award is dedicated to her memory.

About Opterus Inc.

Opterus Inc. is a leading global provider of a cost-effective, easy-to-implement store information and execution management solution that increases productivity and improves retail enterprise communications. Opterus *Store Ops-Center* software is an on-demand, web-based retail portal designed to communicate corporate policy and day-to-day objectives between corporate office and store locations. Deployed in over 45 countries in 30 different languages, the solution is specifically designed for retail operations, and provides store personnel with clear, concise and timely direction, along with the proper tools to best do their jobs to support corporate initiatives. Opterus is based in Toronto, Ontario and was founded in 2006 by a group of seasoned retail industry technology veterans. For additional information about Opterus, please visit <http://www.opterus.com>.

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