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**ICON HONORS 2014 AMERICASMART
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT HONOR GOES TO
BARBARA BRADLEY BAEKGAARD OF VERA BRADLEY**

ATLANTA, March 4, 2014—Barbara Bradley Baekgaard, co-founder and chief creative officer of Vera Bradley, will receive the celebrated **ICON HONORS 2014** Lifetime Achievement Honor in ceremonies marking the fifth annual **ICON HONORS** scheduled for Thursday, July 10 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis.

The Lifetime Achievement Honor presentation traditionally caps the sequence of select recognitions bestowed in the annual **ICON HONORS** celebration, the most anticipated and important night in the home and gift industry. It is conferred by the **ICON HONORS** board of governors, which is co-chaired by **ICON HONORS** founder Jeffrey L. Portman, Sr., vice chairman, president and chief operating officer of **ICON** sponsor AmericasMart® Atlanta, and George Kacic, president of Giftcraft and **ICON HONORS** founding partner.

ICON HONORS is created, produced and staged exclusively by AmericasMart Atlanta in partnership with the Gift & Home Trade Association (GHTA) and Progressive Business Media. The 2014 Lifetime Achievement Honor celebrates Baekgaard's enduring imprint on the gift, fashion and home sector through the continuing influence of the Vera Bradley brand, Portman notes.

Baekgaard co-founded Vera Bradley in 1982. From 1982 through June 2010, she also served as co-president. From the outset, Baekgaard has provided leadership and strategic direction in the brand's development by providing creative vision to areas such as marketing, product design, assortment planning and the design and visual merchandising of the company's stores. In May 2010, she was appointed chief creative officer.

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As co-founder of Vera Bradley, Ms. Baekgaard serves a key leadership role on the company's board of directors, and provides the board with a broad array of institutional knowledge and historical perspective as well as an in-depth knowledge of business strategy, branding, product development and store design.

She currently serves on the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center Development Board and as a board member of the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer. Baekgaard's personal awards include 2007 Country Living Entrepreneur Award and 2006 Gifts and Decorative Accessories Industry Achievement Award.

Vera Bradley creates stylish luggage, handbags and accessories combining smart product designs with distinctive and colorful fabrics and trims. For over 30 years, the demand for their unique handbags and luggage items has grown and so has Vera Bradley, which is now nationally and internationally recognized.

"Barbara embodies American entrepreneurship. She is a pioneer and a dreamer, naturally dauntless and always ready for the next creative adventure," adds Portman. "Her life and her career give voice to the hopes and dreams of all who aspire to do great things," Portman adds.

At the 2014 Ceremonies, the home and gift industry's best and brightest will be celebrated. Guests will enjoy dinner, cocktails and celebrity entertainment in an unforgettable evening of inspiration in celebration of this year's finalists and Honorees.

Throughout the evening of July 10, at the centerpiece event of The Atlanta International Gift and Home Furnishings Market[®], Honors will be presented to home and gift retailers, manufacturers, sales agents and service providers from across the industry.

The **ICON HONORS 2014** celebration is scheduled for Thursday, July 10 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. Please visit www.AmericasMartICONHONORS.com for details. Tickets and tables will be on sale in April at <http://www.AmericasMartICONHONORS.com/tickets>.

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