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**Susan Tachau Receives Ned Gramlich Award for Passionate Advocacy and  
Pioneering Finance Work with Disability Community**

*Tachau's work as CEO of Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation has provided vital low-interest loans and supports to more than 15,000 Pennsylvanians with disabilities*

Washington, D.C. — Disability rights advocate and finance pioneer Susan Tachau has received the 2021 Ned Gramlich Lifetime Achievement Award for Responsible Finance from Opportunity Finance Network (OFN). Presented annually by OFN, a leading national network of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), the award is inspired by former Federal Reserve Governor Ned Gramlich. It is the highest individual honor in the CDFI industry.

Tachau, who will receive the award on October 20 during [OFN's Annual Conference](#), is CEO of [Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation](#) (PATF), a nonprofit CDFI that helps people with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians acquire vital assistive technology devices and services. Providing financing, education, and advocacy, PATF is a resource and champion for the 1.8 million people in Pennsylvania — and millions elsewhere — living with disabilities.

Tachau cofounded PATF in 1998 as Pennsylvania's Alternative Financing Program (AFP), as designated by the federal Assistive Technology Act, and it was certified as a CDFI in 2012. Today, the organization enables people to access assistive technology — including adapted vans, wheelchairs, hearing aids, specialized software, adaptive sports equipment, smart-home solutions, and more — with no-fee, zero- and low-interest loans.

Based in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, PATF also offers comprehensive information about other funding options for assistive technology, as well as financial education through its disability-focused curriculum, *Cents and Sensibility: A Guide to Money Management*. In January, PATF created a subsidiary, Appalachian Assistive Technology Loan Fund (AATLF), so that it can expand its lending to nearby states.



"Susan is an opportunity finance trailblazer for inclusion, access, and financial empowerment for people with disabilities," said Charles Hammerman, president and CEO of the Disability Opportunity Fund. "The mother of a son with a disability, Susan quickly learned of the barriers faced by the 60 million financially vulnerable people with disabilities in America and has devoted her career to empowering them to work, participate in their communities, and live in their own homes."

As an expert in financing and policy related to people with disabilities, Tachau reaches far beyond Pennsylvania. She sits on numerous boards and advisory committees, including the National Disability Institute, the National Disability Finance Coalition, and the Technology Subcommittee of the National Council on Independent Living, and shares her expertise with AFPs, CDFIs, financial and regulatory institutions, and policymakers nationwide.

"My staff and I have had the pleasure of working closely with Susan to promote additional resources for CDFIs to better serve individuals with disabilities," Congresswoman Madeleine Dean said. "As a leading national advocate for alternative financing, Susan is an inspiring and trusted source for federal and state policymakers, colleagues in nonprofit assistance, and families across Pennsylvania."

Since its founding, PATF has extended more than \$43 million in low-interest loans to more than 4,200 Pennsylvanians with disabilities. It has also helped more than 15,000 people access assistive technology with information and educational support.

"It is an honor to receive the Gramlich Award for my life's work," said Tachau. "It is expensive to live with a disability, and for people with disabilities, assistive technology is a lifeline — to work, to connection with others, to independence, to the world. Most of our borrowers are low-income and PATF financing and services are transformational. To be recognized by the CDFI community, with its purpose of social, racial, and economic justice, says that people with disabilities — who are members of all our communities — matter; that they are seen and included. I am deeply grateful."

Gramlich was the Board of Governors' primary liaison to the Federal Reserve's Consumer Advisory Council, advising on community development and consumer finance policy matters. He was an outspoken voice against predatory lending and a strong defender of the Community Reinvestment Act. From October 2006 through his death in 2007, Gramlich served on the Board of OFN.

"Susan embodies the CDFI mission to finance justice and change," said Lisa Mensah, OFN president and CEO. "Under her visionary and dogged leadership, PATF has developed



pioneering loan programs that have helped level the playing field and advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion for people with disabilities. OFN is thrilled to recognize Susan with the Gramlich Award in honor of the fierce advocates who fight for people underserved by mainstream finance institutions and programs.”

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### **About Opportunity Finance Network (OFN)**

OFN, the national network of community development financial institutions (CDFIs), strives to ensure low-income and other under-resourced communities have access to affordable, responsible financial products and services. Members of OFN are CDFIs that deliver responsible lending to help low-income communities join the economic mainstream. Through 2019, OFN’s network originated \$82.7 billion in financing in rural, urban, and Native communities. This financing has helped to create or maintain more than 1,751,000 jobs, start or expand 448,541 businesses and microenterprises, and support the development or rehabilitation of more than 2,148,000 housing units and more than 12,000 community facility projects.