



## **Hollis Thomases, President & CEO Web Ad.vantage, Inc.**

Hollis Thomases, a graduate of Cornell University, founded WebAdvantage.net, a boutique agency providing strategic online marketing and advertising solutions, in 1998 when most businesses were primarily focused on building websites. Realizing that “if we build it, they will come” was not enough, Thomases advocated tactics that generated qualified website traffic and measures that converted those leads into sales. She oversaw the development of processes that enhanced efficiencies and her clients’ bottom line. As a result, Thomases has gained a reputation as one of the industry’s most pragmatic and insightful online marketing gurus and her agency has cultivated an impressive client roster of both national and regional clients including Nokia USA, Johns Hopkins University, Endo Pharmaceuticals, Nature Made Vitamins, Blair Corporation, Home Instead Senior Care, the Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association, Connections Academy and International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Thomases has received multiple awards and recognition. In 2009 she was honored by the University of Baltimore’s Merrick School of Business as Baltimore’s “Distinguished Business Innovation Entrepreneur of the Year.” In 2008, she was named “Enterprising Woman of the Year” in the category of more than \$1 million and up to \$5 million. In March 2007, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) awarded Thomases “Small Business Person of the Year” for the state of Maryland. The annual award recognizes outstanding entrepreneurs for their contribution to the nation’s economy and personal achievements. In 2007, Thomases was a finalist for the 2007 Athena Award for women’s leadership and WebAdvantage.net was named a “Smart Giant” by the Greater Baltimore Technology Council. In 2008, the *Baltimore Business Journal* named WebAdvantage.net has a Top 50 Women-Owned Business and in 2006, Smart Woman magazine selected WebAdvantage.net as a “Best Place for Business Women to Work.”

Since 2005, Thomases has bi-weekly authored the “Planning the Buy” column for top Internet marketing resource site, ClickZ(.com), and in 2007 added the role of official online marketing and advertising blogger for citybizlist.com, for which Thomases comments on search engine news, B2B online marketing, industry forecasts, online/video/mobile ad trends and technologies, social media and more.

Thomases has appeared on television (local ABC, NBC and PBS stations) and on TechTV’s “Working the Web” and in such print publications as the *Business Week*, *Advertising Age*, *Baltimore Sun*, *DM News*, and *The Examiner*. She frequently speaks at such industry and trade conferences as the American Marketing Association, Search Engine Strategies, The Newsletter and Electronic Publishers Association, The Kelsey Group, the Laboratory Product Association, The Direct Marketing Association of Washington DC, and the Vocus Worldwide User Forum.

Active in her community and industry, Thomases has participated in several advisory boards: the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board Information Technology Industry Initiative Steering Committee; Harford County Economic Development Advisory Board; Harford County’s Small Business Development Center Advisory Board; Association for Interactive Marketing’s Online Promotions Council; and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education’s Teen Web Project. Thomases is a current member of the CEO Club and Vistage. She was also a co-founder of the Digital Bridge Initiative, a philanthropic outreach venture between the Greater Baltimore Technology Council (GBTC), of which she is an active participant, and she has been a member of the giving circle, The B’More Fund.