

Minorities and Women in **BUSINESS**

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Character Matters

Tom Wilson – best known as artist of the comic character Ziggy – has teamed with his business partner, **Sue Dreher** of Ziggy & Friends, a few key marketing/branding/licensing industry colleagues, and a virtual network of creative talent to form Character Matters, a service company specializing in creating, developing and revitalizing characters for branding and licensing.

Few people know that while Wilson has been drawing the Ziggy daily comic, he has spent more than 12 years as a “trained brain” for Richard Saunders International in Cincinnati, a company that has been dubbed—by its Fortune 500 clientele—the top “innovation” think-tank and consulting service for developing new brands and products.

To help launch Character Matters, Wilson donated two character designs to the Giraffe Project, a non-profit organization that honors and tells the stories of people who stick their necks out for the common good. The Project has helped Giraffe Heroes win nearly \$1 million dollars for their work from such organizations as Publishers’ Clearing House, United Parcel Service, and Oprah’s Angel Network.

Wilson hopes that through Character Matters’ work the Giraffe Project will become more visible to the nation and to the world—so that their message of courageous compassion can help inspire people to stretch themselves for the common good.

“It’s not really that much of a stretch to imagine the Giraffe Project and Character Matters sticking our necks out together. After all,” continued Wilson, “we have something very special in common. Everybody knows that it’s always much easier to remember a name when you’re able to put a recognizable face to it. The Giraffe Project works hard to put a recognizable face to the names of great people worth remembering, and Character Matters works hard to put a recognizable face to the names of great brands worth remembering.”