



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo presents New York State Senate Commendation Awards

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO October 25, 2024

| ISSUE: **NEW YORK STATE SENATE COMMENDATIONS**



At a special ceremony today at Munson in Utica, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, presented New York State Senate Commendation Awards to several residents of the 53rd Senate District.

Commendations are one of the highest honors that the Senate can use to recognize individuals who have served and made lasting contributions to their community and the state throughout their careers or lives.

Those honored included:

- Antonio “Tony” Cristiano, a respected and well-regarded business owner and philanthropist.
- Roosevelt Patterson, Save Our Streets director who has made it a priority to end gun violence in Utica.
- Kari Puleo, executive director of the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce and business advocate.
- Brian McQueen, educator, past fire chief of the Whitesboro Volunteer Fire Department and creator of the Believe 271 Foundation.
- Jennifer Woodman, cancer research advocate and community advocate.
- Bill Kardas, StormTracker 2 Chief Meteorologist for WKTV.
- Feidy Miner, executive director of the Rome Refugee Services and refugee and community advocate.
- Grace Rapasadi, an accomplished judge and civic leader from Madison County.
- Suzanne Bloom, an internationally acclaimed and award-winning children's book author and illustrator from Chenango County.
- Nick Matt, former chairman and CEO of the FX Matt Brewing Company, a successful long-standing and family-owned brewery in Utica.
- Father Robert C. Weber Jr., a local priest who has a passion for prison ministry and helping the less fortunate.
- Dr. Maria Kontaridis, executive director of the Masonic Medical Research Institute in Utica.

Delores Caruso, New York State Department of Labor Mohawk Valley representative, was unable to attend the ceremony but was also recognized.

Honorees received a personalized plaque and commendation coin as part of the ceremony.

“These honorees are certainly worthy of recognition,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “They have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to helping others and have worked selflessly to improve the wellbeing of area residents, children, families, businesses and communities. Each has truly made a difference and should be applauded and commended for their efforts.”

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