



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## **Senator Griffo honors Utica College President Laura Casamento as 2017 Woman of Distinction**

[Joseph A. Griffo](#)

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*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

***Laura Casamento, Ed.D.***

State Senator Joseph Griffo announced today that Utica College President Laura Casamento was honored in Albany this week as a 2017 New York State Woman of Distinction.

As the first female president of Utica College, Dr. Casamento was selected by Senator Griffo to be this year's Woman of Distinction from his district because of her longtime commitment to making higher education accessible and affordable. Dr. Casamento's passion for progress is defined by a lasting bond to her community and a lifetime of hard work, Senator Griffo said, and this history of achievement in furthering educational opportunity for future generations is worthy of recognition.

Senator Griffo presented Dr. Casamento with the 2017 Woman of Distinction Award Tuesday evening during a ceremony in the Capitol, where Dr. Casamento was joined by her husband, Phil.

A YouTube video of Senator Griffo with Dr. Casamento discussing why he chose to honor her as a Woman of Distinction can be viewed at the following link:

[https://youtu.be/wMW4UgUN\\_n0](https://youtu.be/wMW4UgUN_n0)

"Throughout Dr. Casamento's remarkable life journey, she has always remained true to the priorities and values that make a community stronger," **Senator Griffo said.** "Her leadership at Utica College has not only helped make the college an exceptional institution, but her clear vision has also paved the way for greater

opportunity among our youth. Dr. Casamento's contributions to the overall progress of our region continue to move us in a positive direction, and for that I am proud to select Dr. Casamento as a Woman of Distinction."

Upon receiving this recognition, **Dr. Casamento said**, "To be placed in the company of such a remarkable and inspiring group of women is truly an honor. I am touched and very thankful that Senator Griffo and his colleagues saw me as deserving of such an honor."

Dr. Casamento became the ninth president of Utica College in 2016.

Included in the 2017 Women of Distinction program, Dr. Casamento's bio notes: "Since joining Utica College in 2004, Dr. Casamento played a major role in strengthening the college's financial stability and outlook so that it could improve its teaching and learning environment while enhancing every student's educational experience. Then as Executive Vice President, she led the way to make history and national attention by dramatically lowering Utica College's tuition at a time when our younger generations are challenged by mounting college debt. With her bold vision and leadership, Dr. Casamento has passionately embraced greater opportunity for higher learning."

The State Senate's 'Women of Distinction' program was created in 1998 to honor exceptional achievement, personal excellence and outstanding, courageous, and heroic actions on the part of individual women from across the state.

A Senator from each district annually names one woman representing attributes that serve as an example to all New Yorkers. Each honoree's photograph and biography has become part of a special exhibit proclaiming the unique contributions of exemplary women in New York.

**Dr. Casamento's full bio included in the program reads as follows:**

*Dr. Laura Casamento is the ninth president and 14th chief executive officer of Utica College, and the college's first woman president in its 70-year history. After receiving her Doctorate of Education from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Dr. Casamento has dedicated herself to making college education accessible and affordable. Since joining Utica College in 2004, Dr. Casamento played a major role in strengthening the college's financial*

*stability and outlook so that it could improve its teaching and learning environment while enhancing every student's educational experience. Then as Executive Vice President, she led the way to make history and national attention by dramatically lowering Utica College's tuition at a time when our younger generations are challenged by mounting college debt. With her bold vision and leadership, Dr. Casamento has passionately embraced greater opportunity for higher learning.*

*Dr. Casamento rose to her laudable achievements through a life of hard work, including more than 20 years of senior executive experience in the private sector and higher education. Before arriving at Utica College, she was president and chief operating officer of Herkimer County Trust, an independently owned, state-chartered bank, from 1998 through 2002. As a lifelong resident of the Mohawk Valley, Dr. Casamento remains committed to the region's success and currently serves on the boards of directors for Mohawk Valley Economic Development Growth Enterprises (EDGE), the Kelberman Center for Autism Services, Patriot Federal Bank, and the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties. She continues to be actively involved in many aspects of the community, having also served on the boards of Excellus-Utica Region and the Women's Fund, and as campaign chairperson for the United Way of the Greater Utica Area.*

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