



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Tess Collins

Tess Collins is the owner and operator of McGeary's Irish Pub. Affectionately known as "Den Mother," or "The Queen of Albany," she has been a force in the restaurant scene for decades.

Starting in the 1980s at Justin's on Lark Street, Ms. Collins quickly became the face of the restaurant, and was referred to by many as the "Hostess Extraordinaire." This was in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, and Ms. Collins was at the forefront of rallying community support.

Her next venture was taking over the Lark Tavern on Madison Avenue, just a few doors off Lark Street. There, she continued her tradition of assisting the community by doing numerous events to help support various groups and not-for-profits. If Ms. Collins saw that there was a need within the community, her response was to jump in and offer help. Those who know Ms. Collins will verify that it is next to impossible to say no to her.

When her beloved Lark Tavern was lost in a fire in 2010, she became a partner at McGeary's in downtown Albany. After her arrival, her partner was quite aware that business at the Pub tripled. In her typical style, she has continued with her drive and energy, hosting fundraisers and special events for the betterment of her community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she spearheaded a campaign to buy from area distillers and breweries to keep money in the local economy. She was also at the ready for frontline workers and emergency responders.

One of her more recent ventures was to partner in the opening of The Albany Rock Pit, a new school for kids of all ages and skill levels to interact together to play live music in the local music scene.

Currently, Ms. Collins is looking for her next adventure as she recently put McGeary's up for sale. However, her plan is to still be part of the local restaurant and entertainment scene. Whatever she chooses, it is sure to be a success.

It was once written that she has her own solar system, providing light and gravity for the colorful community in her orbit. Wherever Ms. Collins goes, the solar system will follow!

*Tess Collins was selected as a
2024 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Neil D. Breslin*

