

Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK



NYS SENATOR
PAMELA A. HELMING



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

Across the 54th Senate District of New York State, there are amazing women doing extraordinary things for their communities, workplaces and families.

As the first woman elected to represent the 54th District, home to the birthplace of the women's rights movement, I feel a special responsibility to ensure we recognize and celebrate women for their contributions and achievements.

Women of all ages, backgrounds and talents play an integral role in shaping the future of our communities and state, and inspiring the next generation of leaders. This year, I am proud to honor 19 of them in my annual Women of Distinction program. Individually, their successes are unique. But collectively, they show that each of us can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

May we acknowledge, applaud, support and value one another, always.

Warmest Regards,



Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District



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2020 Woman of Distinction - Holly Anderson

2020 Women of Distinction Nominees

Holly Anderson	Nancy Gowan	Joell Murney-Karston
Laura Arrington	Joanne Greco	Tammy Orlopp
Essie Barnes	Susie Jacobs	Danielle Palermo-Jimenez
Valerie Bost	Mary Beth Leeson	Maureen Reynolds
Bonnie Cazer	Tyler MacNeal	Dr. Linda Ann Townsend
Mickey Freida	Nichole Malec	Lt. Col. Norma Weissend

2019 Woman of Distinction - Marya Vande-Doyle

2019 Women of Distinction Nominees

Elizabeth Becht	Jeanne Giovannini	Heidi Schwittek-Barnes
Lorene Benson	Lucille Hamlin	Mary Simpson Smart
Alice Bill	Christal Kent	Megan Thompson
Wanda Boughton	Kaitlyn Laskoski	Mary Ann Trickey
Surekha Chandak	Margaret Morse	Marya Vande-Doyle
Misty Currington	Melissa Nesbit	Jacqueline Vrooman
Carol Cuthbert	Julie Patterson	Wilma Young
Donna Dedee	Ethel Peters	
Tara Fricano	Dr. Jennifer Schneider	



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2018 Woman of Distinction - Laurie Crane

2018 Women of Distinction Nominees

Julie Bellone	Sarah Lynn Grossman	Connie Patti
Cathleen Bement	Valerie Aarne Grossman	Cheri Roloson
Neetu Chandak	Ellen Hughes	Donna Besler Tatem
Laurie Crane	Tricia Kuntz	Patricia White
Michelle Fridley	Marie Milligan	
Oksana Fuller	Lauren Moore	

2017 Woman of Distinction - Donna Schaertl

2017 Women of Distinction Nominees

Marge Donhauser	Ellen Polimeni
Terrie Meyn	Donna Schaertl
Sue Underhill	





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Mary Beer

*M*ary Beer of Farmington, NY has held many professional leadership positions for over 40 years. She was appointed to the position of Public Health Director of Ontario County in September 2008. She is a Registered Nurse and has experience working in acute care, home care, primary care, long-term care, clinical information technology, managed care, and quality assurance.

Mary graduated from Niagara University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and from Walden University with a Master of Public Health. She is a board member of S2AY Rural Health Network, Finger Lakes Performing Provider System, Partnership for Ontario County, UR Medicine Homecare, and Victor-Farmington Ambulance Corps.

She is also a member of the Common Ground Health Metrics Advisory Committee, Thompson Health's Population Health Committee, Finger Lakes Health Advisory Committee, and Lifespan's Advisory Committee.

In addition to these responsibilities and her duties as a public health official, Mary is a hospice volunteer for Serenity House, and is Past President of the Clifton Springs Rotary Club.

Through her public service as Health Director and as a citizen volunteer, Mary has shown tremendous dedication to her community and has made significant contributions to the health and well-being of Ontario County and the Finger Lakes. Her leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been exemplary.

Originally from Henrietta, Mary resides in Farmington with her husband, Jim. Her interests outside of work include decorating, hiking, water aerobics, ringing in a bell choir, and raising her two Toy Australian Shepherds.

Mary Beer was nominated by Town of Farmington Supervisor, Peter Ingalsbe.





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Tammy Bell

*T*ammy Bell of Auburn tragically lost her son, Marine Staff Sergeant Jerome Bell Jr., in Afghanistan on September 19, 2008. Shortly after, she joined the American Gold Star Mothers.

Gold Star Mothers is a private not-for-profit organization that is an outreach program for mothers who have lost sons or daughters in the service of the U.S. Armed Forces. When Tammy lost her son, this organization helped her cope with the loss. She has been an advocate for other women who have shared in this painful process, and has been an inspiration for many throughout her journey.

Since joining Gold Star Mothers, Tammy and her husband, Jerry, have become very active members and Tammy has held several office positions. Currently, Tammy is the President of New York's American Gold Star Mothers 15th Chapter in Syracuse, as well as the 1st Vice President for the statewide organization.

Tammy is also a volunteer member at the Syracuse VA Center. Before the pandemic began, she would do home visits with veterans and sit and visit with them while their family members ran errands. During the pandemic, with the help of family and friends, she sewed face masks for the veterans and workers at the VA Center. She has continued to regularly visit with veterans, by phone, as she truly enjoys listening to their stories.

Tammy keeps in touch with her son's Marine friends who were with him in Afghanistan and on other tours. Tammy knows that they need her as much as she needs them. To them, Tammy is "Mom Bell" and they are her "Marine Sons."

Tammy and her husband, Jerry, live in Auburn, where they raised their three children, Jerome Jr., TJ and Stacey.

***Tammy Bell was nominated by
Donald Wilson.***





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Jolene "Jody" Bender

*J*ody Bender grew up in Horseheads, NY, but believes that Marion, NY is where she was meant to be. She married her husband, Paul, in 1970 and raised four boys, Paul, Neil, Edward and David.

After moving to Marion, Jody started working for Seneca Foods on the apple line and eventually moved to an office job. In 1977, Jody was asked by Marjorie Haak, the Marion Town Clerk, to be her Deputy Town Clerk. Since then, Jody has dedicated her life to public service. In 1978, in addition to her duties as Deputy Town Clerk, Jody served as the Justice Court Clerk and even took on the position of janitor at the Marion Town Hall. In 1981, the Town Clerk retired and Jody was elected as the Marion Town Clerk, a position she held for 18 years.

In 2001, the position of Town Supervisor opened and Jody ran against three other people and won. She was elected Marion Town Supervisor and became a member of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors.

In 2005, Jody was recognized by Senator Mike Nozzolio as a Woman of Distinction.

In 2013, Jody retired as Supervisor of the Town of Marion. For the last several years, she has worked for New York State Senator Pam Helming as the Constituent Services Representative in Wayne County.

In 2019, Jody was approached to run again for Marion Town Supervisor and won. She continues to serve as Supervisor today.

In her 30-plus years in public service, Jody has most enjoyed listening to the people she serves and trying to make the community a place where all can feel safe and welcomed. Her goal has always been that when people come to the Marion Town Hall, they leave feeling a little bit better than when they arrived.

***Jolene "Jody" Bender was nominated
by Heidi Levan and Kathy Cauwels.***





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Tami Cocuzzi

*T*ami Cocuzzi is a veteran of the U.S. Army and has achieved many wonderful things throughout her life. Tami was a student at Finger Lakes Community College for Business and Graphic Arts. She earned an Associate Degree in both subjects and carried a 4.0 average. She received the Chancellor's Award and the Rochester Area Outstanding Adult Student Award. She was a winner of the FLCC Alumni Scholarship and Americorp Scholarship.

Tami and her husband, Daniel, sold their home and then bought 70 acres of land in Wayne County; they created Grace Racing Ministries, a grassroots ministry catering to at-risk youth. Through the faith-based Grace Racing Ministries, youth in dire situations are given a safe place to go and are mentored in life skills through the sport of motocross. The aim of Grace Racing Ministries is to equip at-risk youth with the life skills necessary to break the cycle of destructive behaviors that they have been exposed to in their lives. Tami and Daniel have built a welcoming place for kids to come and have fun, learn valuable life lessons, be fed, and be loved.

Children who have had no positive examples in their young years are given the opportunity to develop self-discipline, personal goals, and the skill of proactively working toward those goals. They are taught how to care for and repair the motocross bikes they use, giving them other useful skills that develop confidence and pride in their work.

Grace Racing Ministries is supported onsite by The Barns, a small gift shop with unique, locally-crafted wares. Tami also creates custom pieces ranging from furniture to T-shirts to memorabilia engraved in acrylic lights for her loyal supporters and referrals. They also fundraise through their website to support the ministry.

Tami and her husband, Daniel, have four children, Kevin, Christian, Michael and Amanda.

***Tami Cocuzzi was nominated by
Nona Kelly.***





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Pamela Ferranti

*P*am Ferranti has been a true pillar of strength for her family. She and her husband, Phil, have raised eight children together, Thomas, Elizabeth, Jenna, Lauren, Brianna, Alyse, Taylor and Philip III. While she was pregnant with their youngest child, Pam attended college and worked full time at Xerox Corporation, where she has worked for 37 years. She is also vital to her Webster community, as well as Wayne County, where she grew up.

While her children attended school in the Webster Central School District, Pam spent many hours volunteering as a Booster Club member for cheerleading, a Board member for Webster youth football, and Team Manager for her son's "Grow to Pro" travel baseball team, among other activities.

Pam was elected to the Wayne County Fair Board of Directors in 1988. She was elected as its first female Vice President in 1991 and the first female President in 2007, a position she still holds today. Pam has been a lifelong Wayne County Fair participant, starting when she was a young child in 4-H Club and now serving as President. She also volunteers her time as a wedding officiant, working with young couples to make their wedding ceremony perfect in every way.

Pam received the 2011 LeFrois Award from the Webster Jr. Warriors/Webster Jr. Titans for her dedicated volunteerism, the 2008 Changemaker Award from Corporate Meetings & Incentives, and was named a 2007 Best Meeting Practitioner by *Business Travel News Magazine*.

Cheryl Hufland, Pam's nominator, writes, "Pam is the kind of person who would do anything for anyone. She is the most dedicated and hardworking person I know, in both her professional and personal life, and does not ever take the spotlight herself."

***Pamela Ferranti was nominated by
Cheryl Hufland.***





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Lisa Finnegan

*I*n addition to her successful career as a corporate Account Manager for over 30 years, Lisa Finnegan of Walworth has made significant contributions to the Gananda community. She has served on the Gananda Board of Education since 2003, and has served as both the Vice President and President during her tenure. She is a member of various board committees and recently took on the role of Advocacy Liaison to the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA). She earned the Lifetime Achievement Award from NYSSBA in 2020. Lisa assisted in establishing the Gananda Education Foundation in 2017 and continues to volunteer with this organization. She also provides a helping hand to Gananda Dollars for Scholars.

Lisa served on the inaugural boards of both Gananda Youth Football and Cheerleading and Gananda Youth Lacrosse, and chaired many successful fundraising events to benefit student athletes and graduating seniors. As her three sons, John, Connor and Ryan, aged out of these programs, Lisa spent many years volunteering at the high school level with the Gananda performing arts boosters and the Gananda sports boosters. As is the case for most people involved in community organizations, work is not limited to decision-making — you must get your hands dirty! Lisa has solicited sponsors and door prizes, shopped for supplies, opened, worked and closed the concession stand, sold tickets, organized food drives, decorated for cast parties, and swept floors.

Lisa's most important accomplishments have been within her home as a devoted wife and mother. Lisa has provided her three sons with enriched academic, athletic, cultural and social lives. Despite her demanding career that has, until recently, required considerable travel, and her countless hours of community service work, Lisa's family has always benefited from her ability to expertly balance her career, volunteer and family time.

Lisa's husband and her nominator, Martin, writes, "I believe that Lisa's efforts have helped the organizations she has volunteered with grow and prosper beyond her tenure with each, and that she has made a positive impact on the lives of many children within the community — many of whom are now young adults. Lisa is selfless with her time, energy, and in the sharing of her skills and knowledge. Our community is a better place because of her past and continued efforts."

***Lisa Finnegan was nominated by
Martin Finnegan.***





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Dorothy French

*D*orothy French of Walworth, NY has worked tirelessly to educate our community members and preserve our local history.

Each year, the Walworth Historical Society selects an outstanding individual or group to receive its Community Service Award. In 2013, Dorothy French was recognized and the group stated, "The name 'Dorothy French' has come to symbolize the word 'volunteer.' Dorothy always volunteers for committees, helps with baked goods, writes many articles, helps to organize the newsletters, and helps anyone who needs it. Dorothy has worked for several years at the Walworth Historical Society Museum, sorting and filing the many items and tons of papers and documents so that things can be found quickly and easily."

Dorothy also researches and writes many articles for the Walworth Historical Society newsletter that helps organize and preserve our history. It is a large commitment of time and energy and the community is thankful for her important efforts. Future generations will be able to look back and have a better understanding of our community thanks to Dorothy's hard work.

Dorothy has also contributed significantly to the Walworth-Seely Public Library. She served as a trustee from 2000-2008, and has also volunteered for the Friends of the Walworth-Seely Public Library. The "Friends" organize book and bake sales during the year that are essential to supporting the Library so that it may better serve its patrons.

Dorothy's nominator, Supervisor Susie Jacobs, writes, "Dorothy is one of the nicest, kindest and dedicated people in our community. We are all thankful for Dorothy's commitment to making the community a better place and for the countless hours invested in these important educational institutions. Our neighbors are better off due to Dorothy's efforts."

Dorothy French was nominated by Town of Walworth Supervisor, Susie Jacobs.





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Bonnie Hays

*F*or the past 25 years, Bonnie Hays of Palmyra has been the Executive Director of Historic Palmyra. Her quarter century of work with Historic Palmyra is only part of her service to her community. From her service to her country in the U.S. Navy to her volunteer efforts with the Lion's Club and her journalism supporting local sports, Bonnie always puts the community first.

Her love of history and commitment to preserve historical assets in her community is extraordinary. Bonnie's work exceeds all expectations. She ensures that every person entering the museum shares a unique, enriching experience. She made sure that Historic Palmyra was part of the "Path Through History Project" with RIT and provided unprecedented access for students to learn about Palmyra's unique place in history.

Every day, Bonnie works tirelessly in the office and as a volunteer, dedicating her life to the success of several museums and organizations. She gives spectacular presentations on subjects ranging from the Erie Canal to the Underground Railroad to Women of Palmyra. Bonnie was named Pal-Mac Lion of the Year and has served on the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance Board of Directors for over a decade. She also serves on the NYS Archives Records Advisory Committee and the Erie Canal Pirates Committee. A freelance writer, Bonnie covers the Pal-Mac Raiders sports programs and has composed historical news articles in the *Palmyra Courier Journal* for the past six years.

During 1965-1967, Bonnie dedicated her life to her country and served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. In recognition of her incredible service, Bonnie was presented with a Meritorious Service Award.

In summer, Bonnie can be found in the back of the museum with a group of children, digging for artifacts. In winter, she can be seen ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. She plays many roles in the Palmyra community and wears many hats with ease. She is always smiling and ready to tell a story. Bonnie truly does so much for Historic Palmyra, Wayne County and the entire Finger Lakes region. She loves local history, the village and her country. She is a true treasure for the entire community.

Bonnie and her husband, Stephen, have been married for 55 years and together have raised their two sons, Greg and Michael.

***Bonnie Hays was nominated by
Tracy Murphy and Irene Unterborn.***





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Mary "Mickie" Kelly

*M*ary "Mickie" Kelly has served her community as a first responder for more than three decades. She began her career as a nurse at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital. In 1988, she trained as an EMT and joined the Stanley Hall Gorham Ambulance. She also became a firefighter with the Bellona Fire Department. She dispatched for Finger Lakes Ambulance and Mercy Flight Central. For four years, she was also an EMT for Middlesex Volunteer Ambulance.

In 2016, Mickie moved to Hopewell and became an EMT-firefighter, currently holding the title of 1504 EMS Captain at the Hopewell Volunteer Fire Department. Throughout her 33 years on the job as a first responder, she has responded to numerous incidents, including motor vehicle accidents, fires, and water damage, and has helped countless people suffering health crises.

During the pandemic, additional safety issues came into play; however, Mickie's concern is, and always has been, for the patient first. Mickie's dedication to the Hopewell Volunteer Fire Department is the ultimate gift anyone can give to their town. She handles all calls with personal and professional courtesy. During one shift, a father lost his life attempting to save a child. Mickie has become very close to this family and continues to look out for them.

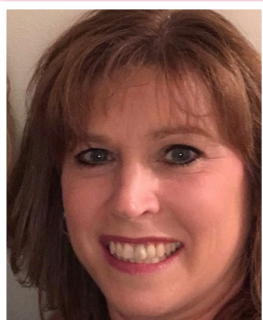
In 2019, Mickie received the Roland E. Pool Memorial Award for her dedication, compassion and loyalty to the Hopewell Fire Department. She teaches EMT and CPR training courses through the Finger Lakes Regional EMS Council.

Mickie knew at a young age that she wanted to become a nurse to assist others — and Hopewell is lucky that she did. Mickie worked 18 years at Finger Lakes Ambulance, and they became a family to her. That is where she met her husband, Ken Kelly. Ken passed away in 2014 after a long battle with cancer. He was instrumental in establishing the Paramedic program at FLCC and bringing emergency medical services to surrounding communities. Ken was awarded Educator of NYS in 2008.

Mickie has three sons, Jamie, Aaron and Billy, and seven grandchildren.

***Mary "Mickie" Kelly was nominated
by Mary Ann Trickey.***





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Shelly Lowe

*F*or the past six years, Shelly Lowe has served as the Executive Assistant to the City Manager for the City of Auburn. Shelly has shown exemplary commitment to her community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January 2021, she has served as the official point person for the City of Auburn and the liaison to the Cayuga County Health Department to roll out the massive undertaking of vaccinating the public. She was trained in the NYS CDMS vaccination registration system and in turn, has trained over 30 City employees to assist with online vaccination registrations. At the start of 2021, the City of Auburn established a COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline that Shelly personally oversees. In the hotline's first week of operation, the City received over 9,000 calls from the public requesting assistance.

In addition, Shelly has assisted at over a dozen on-site vaccination clinics throughout Cayuga County. She has made a particular effort to reach out to minority/underrepresented groups in the City and southern parts of Cayuga County. Shelly has served as a valuable partner to the Booker T. Washington Center, Auburn Community Hospital, East Hill Medical Center, the Auburn Housing Authority and many other local and county agencies.

On top of phone calls, scheduling, and coordination of staff and clinics, Shelly has helped raise education and awareness of the New York State COVID-19 guidelines. This includes communicating with City businesses and organizers of City and private events. Shelly is a positive role model who exemplifies true leadership and puts her best foot forward to ensure success for her community. She has served on many committees, including the Cayuga County United Way Event Committee and Leadership Cayuga Advisory Council. She has also served as the City's United Way Campaign Coordinator and as a member of the Wellness Committee. In recognition of her service, Shelly received the United Way Certificate of Appreciation for hosting a 2020-21 Campaign during COVID-19, and the Silver Award from the United Way for increased employee contributions in 2017.

Shelly's past board participation includes Board of Directors Secretary for the E. John Gavras Center (United Cerebral Palsy Association), YMCA Youth Committee, and multiple volunteer hours where her children went to school.

Shelly holds an Associate Degree in Secretarial Science, has received her Notary Public, and is a graduate of Leadership Cayuga. She is a member of Sacred Heart Parish.

Shelly is a lifetime resident of Auburn and has raised three children, Brett, Abigail, and Lauren. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and participating in sporting activities.

***Shelly Lowe was nominated by
Rhonda Miller.***





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Jessica McDonald

*J*essica McDonald of Geneva is an experienced Director of Individual and Family Services at Happiness House in Canandaigua, NY. Jessica has been with Happiness House for about 12 years. In that time, she has served as a Service Coordinator for individuals with developmental disabilities and has case management experience working with families and children.

While at Happiness House, Jessica earned her Master's Degree in Nonprofit Organizational Public Management at Walden University, enhancing her innate ability to lead a successful department in Adult Services at Happiness House. Jessica earned the Mary Griswold Professional Service Award in 2014. This award recognizes exceptional work of an employee who displays the qualities and professionalism of the agency's mission and vision.

Jessica was also named the 2012 Happiness House Ambassador, and was recognized in the 2013 Finger Lakes Leadership Program and the 2019 Goodwill of the Finger Lakes Leap into Leadership Program. In addition, Jessica regularly participates in the Thrive to Survive Middle Finger 5K, by organizing a team that is usually in the top 10 for participation.

In 2017, Jessica developed breast cancer at the age of 33, with no family history. During this difficult time in her life, and with a new baby and a little one at home, Jessica continued to work through her treatments with a positive, upbeat personality and outlook on her life. In October 2018, Jessica shared her story on *13WHAM News*, so she could be a voice for young women to check themselves for breast cancer and to not feel ashamed or embarrassed of the diagnosis. Jessica's nominator, Shelby, writes, "I admire Jessica for all of her strength and positivity during that time and beyond. Her strength and compassion is what makes her deserving of the Women of Distinction Award."

Jessica has the great support of her husband, Kevin, and their children, Shea and Nolan.

***Jessica McDonald was nominated by
Shelby Fisher.***





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

Lori Miller

*L*ori Miller of Auburn left her job in 1988 to pursue her dream of being a stay-at-home wife and mother. She has devoted her life to her family.

Lori homeschooled her two sons and worked from home as a babysitter. She not only raised her two sons, but helped to raise many children throughout the community in her role as a babysitter over the last 30-plus years. She demonstrates and teaches manners, respect, and Christian values to all the kids she encounters.

Lori has volunteered in children's ministries at her church, including Children's Bible Club. She also volunteers to sing in the church choir. Lori's son and her nominator, Adam, writes, "Lori is an amazing woman, a Godly woman and she's my mom!"

Lori is extremely grateful for her husband, Grant, two sons, Adam and Jeremiah, two daughters-in-law, Johanna and Melissa, and her three grandsons, Elisha, Jonathan and Samuel.

***Lori Miller was nominated by
Adam Miller.***





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

Pam Rapoza

*P*am Rapoza of Geneva, NY is a distinguished educator, artist, activist, and community advocate. She studied education and theatre at SUNY Fredonia where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master of Science in Early Childhood Education. Pam started her career working for a migrant Head Start program serving a transient migrant population in the Finger Lakes region.

She later spent 10 years working for the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District, teaching young learners in Kindergarten and First Grade. Pam was awarded a National Board for Professional Teaching Certification in 2005 — the most coveted, rare, and respected professional certification in K-12 education. For her dynamic teaching style, she was awarded a scholarship to one of the first cohorts of the Finger Lakes Leadership Institute, an honor given to those educators in the region with exceptional leadership skills. She studied Educational Leadership and earned her Administrative Degree at the University of Rochester. Pam worked at Dundee Central School for 13 years, serving in multiple administrative roles, including Elementary Principal and Director of Curriculum. She currently is the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Learning at Trumansburg Central School, where she serves the TST BOCES region on its regional curriculum council.

In addition to her K-12 experiences, Pam continues to serve children with her published book, "Delores Bakes a Fortune," a story for children to learn to believe in themselves and manifest their best life. Pam's book is sold nationally in Barnes & Noble and on Amazon.com. She hosts writing workshops for local schools and is a reading advocate for all children.

Pam has been a lifetime theatre artist, learning about, performing, creating, choreographing, directing, and producing theatre for 40 years. Pam has been a part of hundreds of productions with local community theatre groups and donates most of her free time to the pursuit of the arts in the Finger Lakes. She is a Theatre Association of New York State Award-winning director and actor multiple times. She has served with the Theatre Association of New York State as a roving adjudicator, providing feedback to hundreds of New York State community theatres in an effort to improve their art form.

Pam has also served as a Division Leader and Steering Committee member for the Rochester Broadway Theatre League's Education Program, Stars of Tomorrow. This program provides educational feedback and opportunity for area high school theatre students. She is also the founding artistic director of her own regional community theatre company, Theatre444, which was created to provide local artists, children, and art enthusiasts with opportunities for high quality theatre experiences that impact and inspire.

Pam has dedicated her life to connecting people with art, and sharing innovative experiences and opportunities with the community. She strives to challenge our community to think differently about ways to serve and inspire change and growth through artistic values and purpose.



***Pam Rapoza was nominated by
Frank Acker.***



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Jennifer Scott

*J*ennifer Scott of Canandaigua is an exceptional Certified Nurse Midwife. She was inspired by her experience at Frontier Nursing University, where she earned her Master of Science in Midwifery and graduated with honors. Jennifer began her RN career at F.F. Thompson Hospital, where she attended over 600 births and provided full-scope women's health care. In late 2018, she learned that the only licensed midwife serving the Old Order Mennonite community of Yates County had suddenly passed away.

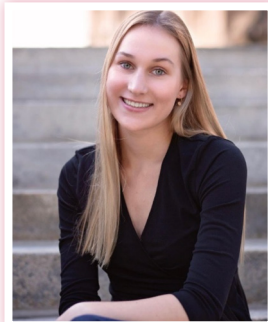
Given the Mennonites' deep-rooted tradition of home birth, this left a large populace without adequate maternity care. In response to this need, Jennifer left Thompson Hospital in mid-2019 to attend full-time to the Mennonite community. She partnered with them in September 2020 as a long-term maternal care provider. Since then, she has recruited a midwife colleague to join her in this endeavor.

Community Midwives is a simple, self-sufficient organization. They draw their own labs, book their own appointments, and spend their time on rural farms. They are always making an impact. Jennifer provides the Mennonite community with safe birthing options and truly respects their cultural and religious preferences. Jennifer also has an excellent relationship with local hospitals so that patients who need a higher level of care can have seamless access to those services. She always makes sure that her patients are receiving the very best care under her supervision.

Throughout her inspiring and successful career, Jennifer has the great support of her loving family, including her husband, Dr. Robert Scott, son, Sam, and daughter, Anna, and three stepchildren, Adam, Margaret and Elizabeth.

***Jennifer Scott was nominated by
Sarah McKinney.***





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Suzanne Sokolowski

Suzanne Sokolowski is a high school student at Webster Thomas High School where she maintains a 98% GPA while having taken 10 Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Due to her excellent performance on AP examinations, she has earned the AP Scholar with Distinction Award. Suzanne has also been recognized for her leadership as a United States Senate Youth Program semifinalist and is the Wells College 21st Century Leadership Award recipient.

In school, she excels in the Business Department and has received the Titan Scholar Award in Business two times. Suzanne has completed the Microsoft Office Specialist (Word) certification through her school's Business Department. She is a member of the Business and Marketing Honor Society of New York State, and also participates in her school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter. In this club, Suzanne has placed first in Accounting at the District 10 Competition and serves as the President of both this club and the Rotary Interact Club.

In the Interact Club, she performs community service at different local events. Suzanne has been inducted with distinction for contributing many hours of volunteer work, and also performs community service as a member of the National Honor Society. Additionally, Suzanne has been recognized by the National Spanish Honor Society. Besides her native language of English, she speaks both Spanish and Polish.

Suzanne is a competitive athlete in the sport of swimming and has been selected for the USA Swimming Select Zone Camp. She has recently qualified for the 2020 USA Swimming Winter Junior Nationals. She is a Niagara LSC, high school district, and club team record holder. In her club team, the Webster Bluefins, she has been consistently selected as the Most Outstanding Junior Female Swimmer. Suzanne was elected to serve as an Athlete Representative in the governance of USA Swimming, where she leads athletes and volunteers to better the sport of swimming.

Throughout all of Suzanne's incredible accomplishments, she has had the support of her parents, Piotr and Joanna, and her brother, Adam.

***Suzanne Sokolowski was nominated
by Tammy Salvione.***





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Dina Stuck

*D*ina Stuck of Seneca Falls, NY joined G.W. Lisk in 2015 as Director of Human Resources. She excels as a human resources executive and is a key member of G.W. Lisk's leadership team. Dina is currently the Vice President of Human Resources.

As the world, the country and our community were engulfed by the COVID-19 pandemic, G.W. Lisk's leadership team faced numerous and unsettling unknowns. From the outset, the business managed day by day with a singular focus on maintaining the health and safety of the workforce. Dina's leadership and support during this challenging journey was invaluable. She remained current with rapidly-evolving executive orders and regulations and helped translate these generalities into common sense, specific workplace safety procedures.

Dina is a key partner in maintaining "often and open" communication with employees, helping to reassure them during a time of great uncertainty. As a result of these efforts, G.W. Lisk maintains a COVID-19 infection rate substantially lower than the infection rate experienced in New York State. The company, an essential business, stayed safe and fully operational throughout the pandemic, thanks to Dina's leadership.

In addition, Dina is responsible for several other diverse businesses owned by G.W. Lisk, including an ambulance company, a restaurant, flower shop, gift shop, hardware store and machine shop. In 2021, Dina started a Leadership Development Program at Lisk, teaching the "soft skills" of leadership to 26 future Operations Leads. She is extremely passionate about this program. Dina also works closely with her Global HR team through Lisk plants in Ireland and China. Her nominator, Edward Maier, praised her hard work, saying, "I am thankful to have such a talented executive as part of our team."

As a member of the Clifton Springs Hospital Board of Trustees, Dina is also active in the oversight of this key community health resource.

Dina and her husband of 25 years, Ron, have raised their two children, Taylor and William, in Seneca Falls.

Dina Stuck was nominated by Edward Maier, President & CEO of G.W. Lisk.





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

Sherri Viggiano- Hipkens

*S*herri Viggiano-Hipkens has dedicated her life to serving the needs of patients in the Auburn area. She has been a nurse practitioner for 30 years and a nurse for 34 years. Her career includes work as a staff nurse practitioner at Auburn Nursing Home and East Hill Family Medical.

Sherri has trained new nurse practitioners and loves to teach, but her first love is working with underprivileged and often forgotten populations. Sherri worked on a mobile medical bus that traveled into national forests to supply medical care for the people living there.

Sherri recently retired from family medicine and now runs her own small practice, SVH Consulting, out of Liverpool. At her practice, she serves the Central New York area by performing annual physicals for New York State Department of Transportation workers.

Sherri has always given 110% to her patients and to her work. She truly cares about her patients, going above and beyond to ensure they receive the best medical care possible while under her care.

Sherri has enjoyed working with families and their relatives. She feels it is important to know your patients and their problems, along with their triumphs, throughout their lives.

***Sherri Viggiano-Hipkens was nominated
by Chelsey Hipkens.***





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

Marita Wallace

*M*arita Wallace of Geneva, NY has been breaking glass ceilings her entire career. She was the first female salesperson in the paper industry, and then became the industry's first female Sales Manager in the 1970s. The paper industry was then an all male-dominated business, but Marita persisted. She was only 24 years old at the time, and had only been in the United States for a few years. She emigrated from Germany when she was 20 years old.

In the mid-1990s, Marita started one of the first website design companies in the southwestern United States. She then became a founder of one of the first solar installation companies in upstate New York. Marita is an innovator. She has fought her way into many male-dominated industries and achieved great success. With her confident sales manner, she has grown four kitchen-table startups to multiple millions of dollars in revenue.

Marita is well-known in the Finger Lakes wine and beer industry as an outspoken advocate, and is a beloved and dedicated member of the Geneva Business Improvement District Executive Board.

Some of Marita's personal hobbies include gourmet cooking and breadmaking. She also enjoys knitting, crocheting and painting. Her favorite way to spend her personal time is with her son, Ryan, and her two grandsons, who are the center of her life.

***Marita Wallace was nominated by
Ryan Wallace.***





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

Linda Wyse

*L*inda Wyse of Ontario, NY is the founding member of the Ontario Food Pantry. She was the person who led the idea for the pantry and was the driving force behind it being built. Linda volunteers at the Ontario Food Pantry and has served on the Board of Directors since it opened 16 years ago. She currently serves as the Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator.

Linda is a lifetime member of the Ontario Fire Company's Auxiliary and has served as the President and Treasurer. She is also a 16-plus year member of the Ontario-Walworth Rotary Club with perfect attendance. She is a Past President of her Rotary Club and served for 14 years as Secretary as well. She has played a big role with the Rotary Food Trailer at Casey Park to provide services to the players and families of youth baseball and soccer. At the Rotary District level, Linda has served as Executive Secretary for six years.

In addition, Linda has dedicated her time to supporting both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. In Boy Scouts, Linda served for 25 years as an Advisor for the Ontario Fire Explorer Post. In Girl Scouts, she has spent several years serving as a Scout Leader. Linda is a true inspiration to our youth leaders.

Linda is an active lifelong member of the Ontario First Baptist Church and is currently serving as a Deacon. She also serves on the Board of Christian Education as a worship leader, sings with the praise band, "Bound by Christ," and volunteers at the Good Samaritan Clothes Closet.

While serving her community in so many meaningful ways, Linda worked for Peter Parts Electronics for 30 years managing finances.

Linda Wyse was nominated by Town of Ontario Supervisor, Frank Robusto.



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

