



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Denise Civiletti

Denise Civiletti is the co-founder, editor and co-publisher of RiverheadLOCAL, which covers the eastern Long Island community of Riverhead and surrounding areas.

Ms. Civiletti launched RiverheadLOCAL with her husband, Peter Blasl, in 2010. Today, the site reaches over 150,000 unique visitors each month, providing online daily coverage of town and county government, education, health, environment and community news.

As a past editor and co-publisher of local newspapers and several niche print publications, Ms. Civiletti led an editorial and production staff of 30 and managed the paper's navigation into the world of digital media.

Understanding the urgent need to untether local news from the albatross of legacy media's failing business model, Ms. Civiletti set out to forge a sustainable, online-only local news model. Her vision and passion for local news, new technology and the Riverhead community came together in RiverheadLOCAL — at a time when independent online local news was still in its infancy. RiverheadLOCAL is today one of the most successful independent local news websites in the United States.

Her work in journalism has garnered numerous awards, including New York Press Association writer of the year (2014) and investigative reporting (2018) awards.

Ms. Civiletti is a founding member of LION Publishers, a national organization of local independent online news publishers, where she is a past member of its board of directors. She is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and Investigative Reporters and Editors.

Ms. Civiletti holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Stony Brook University (1979) and a law degree from New York University School of Law (1982). She is admitted to practice in the State and federal courts. Ms. Civiletti was elected Riverhead Town Councilwoman in 1987 at the age of 29, becoming the first woman elected to a full four-year term in the Town's history.

Married for 28 years to Peter, they are the proud parents of two adult daughters, Katie and Courtney — also Stony Brook grads and the next generation of local news publishers in Riverhead.

***Denise Civiletti was selected as a
2020 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator Kenneth P. LaValle.***

