Embracing Our Past, Empowering Our Future
47th Annual NACW Conference & Empowerment Summit

JULY 12 - 16, 2017

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
Buffalo, New York
### Wednesday, July 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noon - 6pm</td>
<td>Conference Registration: Coat Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>3pm - 5:30pm</td>
<td><strong>NACW board meeting:</strong> Board Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:15 - 8pm</td>
<td>Welcome Reception: hosted by Erie County and Women Events Buffalo:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WNY Book Arts Center / 468 Washington Street, 2nd Floor, Buffalo, NY</td>
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### Thursday, July 13 - *Embracing Our Past*

**Morning Sessions Part 1: 8:30am - 10am**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am - Noon</td>
<td>Conference Registration: Coat Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:30am</td>
<td><strong>NACW Business meeting #1:</strong> Board Room</td>
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**Morning Sessions Part 1: 8:30am - 10am**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 10am</td>
<td><strong>Session A - Public Speaking:</strong> Regency A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jenni Prisk - President, Prisk Communication</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK: 10 - 10:15AM</strong></td>
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**Morning Sessions Part 2: 10:15am - 11:45am**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:15 - 11:45am</td>
<td><strong>Session A - Women’s Suffrage Panel:</strong> Regency B</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Melissa Brown, Executive Director, Buffalo History Museum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Dr. Susan Goodier - Public Scholar, New York Council for the Humanities, Coordinator for the Upstate New York Women’s History Organization and a Lecturer at SUNY Oneonta, Department of History</td>
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<td>• Joan Bozer- Former Erie County Legislator, and former president, Junior League of Buffalo, League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara, and Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lillian Williams - Associate Professor, Transnational Studies, University at Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 - 11:45am</td>
<td><strong>Session B - Crisis Management:</strong> Regency C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Steven Bell, VP Eric Mower Associates</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK: 11:45 - NOON</strong></td>
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**Lunch Session: Noon - 1:30pm - Grand BC**
Thursday, July 13 - *Embracing Our Past*

**Welcome and Opening Remarks:** Noon - 1:30pm - Grand BC

- County Executive, Mark Poloncarz
- Buffalo Mayor, Byron Brown
- Kristin Garvey, President, NACW
- Karen King, Executive Director, ECCSW

**Lunch Keynote:** Women’s Suffrage:
- Dr. Shannon Risk, Niagara University - *The Legacy of Women’s Suffrage in New York State*

**Afternoon Sessions:** 1:45pm - 3pm

- **Session A - Commission Sustainability:** Regency A

**Friday, July 14 - *Assessing the Present Landscape***

- **8am - 6pm**
  - Conference Registration: Coat Room

- **8:30 - 9:30am**
  - **NACW Business Meeting #2:** Board Room

**Morning Sessions Part 1: 8:30am - 10am**

- **Session A - Women in Leadership Panel:** Regency B
  - **Moderator:** Althea Luehrsen, CEO, Leadership Buffalo
  - Ellen Grant - Ph.D., LCSW-R, Author and National Senior Vice President for Programs, Say Yes to Education, Inc. SAY YES
  - Kelly O’Neill - Owner and Personal Financial Advisor at Lighthouse Financial Asset Management, LLC, Board Member of NAWBO, Buffalo Niagara Chapter
  - Heather Gresham - Executive Director, Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board
  - Sara Vescio - Executive Director, Canisius Women’s Business Center
  - Ulla Bak - President, BAKUSA
  - Dr. Glenna Bett - CEO, Cytocybernetics & Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, University at Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
Friday, July 14 - Assessing the Present Landscape

Morning Sessions Part 2: 10:15 - 11:45am

10:15 - 11:45am Session A - Women's Healthcare: Regency B
Moderators: Karen King & Kristin Garvey
• Dr. Gale Burstein - Commissioner of Health, Erie County and Clinical Professor, University at Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
• Dr. Nancy Nielsen - Clinical Professor, University at Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
• Isabel Marcus - Professor, University at Buffalo Law School
• Michelle Casey, President, CEO Planned Parenthood CWNY
• Dr. Jamila Perritt, Faculty, for the Fellowship in Family Planning at Washington Hospital Center and Howard University

Morning Sessions Part 2: 10:15 - 11:45am

10:15 - 11:45am Session B - Economic Justice: Legislative Updates, Regency C
Moderator: Beverly Neufeld, Founder and President, POWHER NY
• Grace Protos, United States Department of Labor, DOL, Women’s Bureau
• Diana Kastenbaum, CEO, Pinnacle Manufacturing and 2016 Congressional candidate for NY-27 district
• Jill Ashton, Director, Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Lunch Session Noon - 1:30pm - Grand BC

Noon - 1:30pm
Lunch Welcome:
• New York State Lieutenant Governor, Kathy Hochul
Opening Remarks:
• United States Senator for New York, Kirsten Gillibrand
Lunch Keynote:
Status of Pay Equity: New Data, New Strategies
• Evelyn Murphy, Executive Director - The Wage Project and Former Lieutenant Governor, Massachusetts

KATHY HOCHUL
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
EVELYN MURPHY
### Afternoon Sessions Part 1: 1:45pm - 3pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session A - Advocating for Women: Regency B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:45</td>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Maria Whyte, Deputy Erie County Executive</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Sheri Scavone, Executive Director, WNY Women’s Foundation</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Diana Cihak, President &amp; Founder - Women Elect</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Toni Majchrzak - ZONTA</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Michelle Holler, Program Manager - West Side Bazaar</td>
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### Afternoon Sessions Part 1: 1:45pm - 3pm

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session B - Women and Media: Changing Roles, Regency C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:45</td>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Katherine Lucas, Owner &amp; Executive Producer of Buffalo Video Production</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Jacquie Walker, News Anchor, WIVB-TV</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Sheila Brown - CEO, Vision Multi-Media</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Linda Pellegrino - Host, AM Buffalo, WKBW-TV</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Jackie Albarella, President - Albarella Media</td>
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<td>1:45</td>
<td>• Susan Arbetter, Host and Producer, WCNY’s The Capital Pressroom</td>
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| Time   | Break: 3:00 - 3:15pm |

### Afternoon Session Part 2: SPECIAL SESSION 3:15pm - 4:45pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Women in Politics: Panel Discussion - Regency B</th>
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<tr>
<td>3:15</td>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Susan Arbetter, Host and Producer, WCNY’s The Capital Pressroom</td>
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<td>3:15</td>
<td>• Evelyn Murphy - President, The Wage Project and Former Lieutenant Governor, Massachusetts</td>
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<td>3:15</td>
<td>• The Honorable Assembly member, Crystal Peoples-Stokes - NY State Assembly</td>
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<td>3:15</td>
<td>• The Honorable Legislator, Barbra Miller-Williams - Erie County Legislator</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15</td>
<td>• The Honorable Legislator, Lynne Dixon - Erie County Legislator</td>
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<td>3:15</td>
<td>• The Honorable Justice, Erin Peradotto - NY Supreme Court Judge</td>
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### WNY Women’s Summit: 5:00pm - 6:30pm - Regency A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Women’s Action Coalition - Collective Impact Workshop</th>
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<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>• Laura Ryan, President of LAMA Inc.</td>
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**WNY Women's Action Coalition**

*Creativity Leading Innovation*
# Dinner Session 6:45pm - 8:00pm - Grand BC

**6:45 - 8:00pm**  
**Dinner Keynote:** Amanda Nguyen - President and Founder, RISE - *Collective Action, Collective Impact*

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## Saturday, July 15 - **Empowering Our Future**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 - 8:45am</td>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 - 9:00am</td>
<td>NACW Business Meeting #3  - Board Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:15am</td>
<td>Girls Summit Registration - Coat Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 - 11:45am</td>
<td>Commission Exchange - Regency C</td>
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### Girls Summit Morning Sessions: 9:30am - 11:45am - Regency B

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:15 - 9:30am</td>
<td>Welcome - Tamara L. McMillan, CEO, McMillan Empowerment Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 - 10:10am</td>
<td>Session 1: Social Empowerment: Healthy Decision Making - Tamara Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 - 10:55am</td>
<td>Session 2: Political Empowerment: First Amendment, First Vote - Melina Carnicelli</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:45am</td>
<td>Session 3: Economic Empowerment: Mentorship, Sponsorship, Entrepreneurship</td>
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**Moderator:** Joan Graci, APA Solutions  
- Zandra Cunningham - Zandra Beauty  
- Michelle Kavanaugh, President - WNY STEM HUB  
- Michelle Martin, Community Development Manager, Girl Scouts of WNY

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### Morning Sessions Part 1 - 9:00am - 10:30am

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 10:30am</td>
<td>Session A: Brand Building and Social Media: Regency A</td>
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</table>

**Moderator:** Molly Anderson, ED, Center for Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness, UB School of Management  
- Katherine Smith - President, White Rabbit Design and President, Buffalo, Niagara NYS Women Inc.  
- Sabina Ramsey - Founder and CEO, Insight International, Past President, NAWBO  
- Jennifer Parker - President, Jackson Parker Communications, NAWBO Member
### Saturday, July 15 - **Empowering Our Future**

#### Morning Sessions Part 2: 10:45am - Noon

10:45 - Noon

**Session A - Violence against Women Panel:** Regency A  
**Moderator:** Judith Olin, Assistant Clinical Professor; Director, Family Violence and Women’s Rights Clinic, University at Buffalo Law School  
- Peg Simons - WNY Family Justice Center  
- Nneka Macgregor, Executive Director, The Women’s Centre for Social Justice, Toronto, Ontario  
- Sandra Lahrache, Founder and President, The Teal Project  
- Matthew Withiam, MD, PhD, Associate Research Professor, University at Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

**Lunch Session with Girls Summit** - Grand BC

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#### Lunch Session: Noon - 1:30pm

Noon - 1:30pm

**Lunch Keynote:** Sara Emhof, Senior Program Manager, Close Up Foundation  
- Facilitated lunch table discussions with students and mentors

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#### BREAK: 1:30 – 1:45pm

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#### Afternoon Sessions: 1:45pm - 3:00pm

1:45 - 3:00pm

**Session A - The Status of the Women Refugee Community** - Regency A  
**Moderator:** Hannah Holden, Community Coordinator, New American Committee, Erie County  
- Gamileh Jamil - Executive Director, Access WNY  
- Hana Mirach - Director of Resettlement, Journey’s End  
- Meghan Maloney de Zaldivar, Senior Associate for Regional Outreach, The New York Immigration Coalition

**NACW Board Meeting** - Board Room

3:30 - 5:30pm  
**Explore Buffalo Walking Tour**

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#### Evening Session: 6:00am - 8:30pm

6:00 - 8:30pm

**Closing Reception: Keynote and Entertainment** - Grand BC  
- Entertainment: Diva by Diva

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Sunday, July 16 - Seneca Falls

Commissioner’s trip to Seneca Falls

Tour:
- First Presbyterian Church where Alice Paul introduced the ERA in 1923
- The Park & the Wesleyn Chapel
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton House and the now Hall of Fame

You Gain Strength,
courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along."

You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt
One of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s top priorities in the United States Senate is to rebuild the American economy. She is fighting every day for more good-paying jobs, more products stamped with the words “Made in America,” and more new small businesses around New York State. She is determined to make sure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to reach their potential, and she has consistently been a voice for the voiceless across New York and all around the country.

Throughout her time in the Senate, Senator Gillibrand has been a leader in some of the toughest fights in Washington. She led the effort to repeal the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy that banned gays from serving openly in the military; she wrote the STOCK Act, which made it illegal for members of Congress to financially benefit from inside information; and she won the long fight to provide permanent health care and compensation to the 9/11 first responders and community survivors who are sick with diseases caused by the toxins at Ground Zero. Senator Gillibrand brought Democrats and Republicans together to win these legislative victories.

Senator Gillibrand believes that accountability and transparency are essential to open and honest government. She was the first member of Congress ever to post her official daily meetings, earmarks, and personal financial disclosures online. Senator Gillibrand is leading the fight to reform the justice system for sexual assault survivors in the military and on college campuses. In 2013, as chair of the Armed Services subcommittee on personnel, she held the first Senate hearing on the issue of sexual assault in the military in almost a decade, and has built a bipartisan coalition of Senators in support of her bill, the Military Justice Improvement Act, which would remove sexual assault cases from the chain of command. She has also built a broad, bipartisan coalition for the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which would finally hold colleges accountable for sexual assault on their campuses.

As the mother of two young sons, Senator Gillibrand understands the challenges that working families are facing in today’s economy. She is a champion for the economic empowerment of women and working families, and she has authored new legislation to rewrite the rules of the workplace so it can keep up with our changing workforce. She is fighting to pass bills that would raise the minimum wage, make quality child care more affordable, create universal pre-K, and ensure equal pay for equal work. Senator Gillibrand also introduced the FAMILY Act, which would create a national paid leave program for all American workers — for about the cost of a cup of coffee a week.

After working as an attorney in New York City for more than a decade, Senator Gillibrand served as Special Counsel to United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Andrew Cuomo during the Clinton Administration. She then worked as an attorney in Upstate New York before becoming a member of Congress. Born and raised in upstate New York, Senator Gillibrand’s home is in Brunswick, New York, with her husband, Jonathan Gillibrand, and their two sons, Theo and Henry.

New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul was elected in 2014. Prior to her role as a statewide official, she was elected at both the Federal and local level — she was a Member of Congress in New York’s 26th Congressional District, served as Erie County Clerk, and began her career in public office on her local town board.

The Lieutenant Governor chairs Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils, which have reinvented economic development by empowering local leaders in business and academia. This strategy has brought more jobs than ever before to New York State.

As the highest ranking female elected official in New York State, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul is committed to inspiring a new generation of women to enter public service or aspire to leadership within their chosen field through the #NYWomenLead initiative. The Lieutenant Governor spearheads the administration’s key efforts to advance equality, championing campaigns for fair wages, paid family leave, Enough is Enough to combat sexual assault on college campuses, and eliminating the wage gap. In 2016, she was elected chair of New York State’s Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission.

The Lieutenant Governor is dedicated to her role as the Governor’s eyes and ears on the ground. She makes a point of traveling to all 62 counties every year she’s in office, traveling enough miles to circle the globe over three times.
KEYNOTE / SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

EVELYN MURPHY is founder and President of The WAGE Project, Inc. (WAGE), a nationwide, grassroots, action-oriented organization dedicated to eliminating the gender wage gap. Prior to turning over $Start $mart and Work $mart -- salary negotiation workshops teaching women how to get paid what we are worth - to the AAUW, WAGE facilitated these workshops in 49 states on 400 campuses and to working women from high earning surgeons to community nonprofit workers in YWCAs throughout America. WAGE advises Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s Office of Women’s Advancement in the delivery of these free workshops to 85,000 women, i.e., half the working women of Boston. She is Co-chair of the Mayor’s Boston Women’s Workforce Council, working with employers to eliminate their gender wage gaps.

She served as MA Secretary of Environmental Affairs and later, Secretary of Economic Affairs. In 1986, she was elected Lt. Governor of Massachusetts, becoming the first woman in the state’s 200+ year history to hold constitutional office. Prior to that, no woman had ever served as Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Auditor or United States Senator.

Dr. Murphy is Director of Citizens Energy Corporation; SBLI USA Life Insurance Company, New York City; and Shenandoah Life Insurance Company, Roanoke, VA. In her civic role, she is a founding Director of The Commonwealth Institute; Trustee, the MA Treasurer’s Economic Empowerment Trust Fund; Director of the Women’s Studies Research Center at Brandeis University; Honorary Chair, The Last Coin Women’s Fund; Advisory Board Member of the Center for Women and Work, UMass Lowell; and the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, UMass Boston.

She earned a BA in mathematics from Duke University; MA in economics from Columbia University; a PhD in economics from Duke University. She is the author of Getting Even: Why Women Don’t Get Paid Like Men and What To Do About It, recipient of eleven honorary degrees, the Distinguished Alumnae Award of Duke University Graduate School, and over one hundred awards from federal, state and community organizations, including in 2017 the Pinnacle Award for Lifetime Achievement by the Boston Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time she has run the Boston Marathon several times and can be seen in Fenway Park cheering for the Boston Red Sox.

AMANDA NGUYEN is the president and founder of Rise. She conceived the Survivors’ Bill of Rights and theory of model social change, after having to navigate the broken criminal justice system after her own rape. She penned her own civil rights into existence; the bill she drafted is now federal law, as well as Massachusetts, Oregon, Virginia, Maryland, Idaho and Washington state law. These laws codify civil rights for at least 25 million rape survivors. Rise’s effort was not only historic in substance, but also, it did the near impossible - pass unanimously through the most partisan Congress in history, a feat done by only 21 bills, or 0.016% of passed bills, in modern US history.

For her leadership of Rise, Amanda has been named by Foreign Policy as a Top 100 Leading Global Thinker, Marie Claire as a Young Woman of the Year, 92Y as Extraordinary Woman of the Year, Forbes 30 Under 30 and The Tempest as the #1 Woman of Color Trailblazer in 2016. She also won the 2016 TED Fellowship (watch her talk at TED2016) and is a 2017 TED Senior Fellow. Previously, Amanda was appointed by President Barack Obama to the United States Department of State as his Deputy White House Liaison. Before that, she served at NASA, the White House, and Morgan Stanley. Amanda graduated from Harvard University.

Amanda’s work has been covered by over 300 media outlets, including The New York Times, The Guardian, The Boston Globe, PBS NewsHour, Vice on HBO, MTV, and Buzzfeed.

SHANNON M. RISK is an associate professor at Niagara University and specializes in progressive American and Canadian history. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Maine. Her dissertation was a comparative suffrage history of Maine and New Brunswick. She held a Fulbright Fellowship to Canada in the 2008-2009 academic year. She worked for a decade as a museum professional, including at the Susan B. Anthony House. Risk has published suffrage histories in a number of journals and is currently working on a biography of American missionary and suffragist Elizabeth Upham Yates.
MOLLY ANDERSON serves as the executive director of University at Buffalo’s Center for Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (CLEO) in the School of Management where she leads program development and partnerships to create better leaders and organizations. She works as a coach for UB MBA students in the LeaderCORE program and recently served as co-moderator for the UB Distinguished Speakers series.

As former President and CEO of Leadership Niagara, she transformed the 30-year-old non-profit organization into a premier binational leadership development program and into a national award winning model for innovation and excellence.

Prior to joining Leadership Niagara, Molly served on the executive team for former County Executive Chris Collins and was director of communications for Senator Michael Ranzenhofer’s successful State Senate Campaign in 2008. Molly was the former director of marketing and development at Houghton College, where she served on the President’s re-Engineering team, oversaw the college’s Business and Professional Advisory Council, and directed its 48-acre campus.

JACKIE ALBARELLA is an award winning documentary filmmaker, artist and gardener. Her photography has been exhibited throughout the country with one-woman exhibits at The Burchfield Penney Art Center in Buffalo, NY; WNED-TV Horizons Gallery, The University Women Association of Rochester, NY and the Gallery at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

Jackie’s video work ranges from video projects for Fortune 100 companies to television programming and documentaries. Her work with Fortune 100 companies has taken her across the country and to Ireland, England and Hawaii. Clients include; Fisher Price/Mattel, Rich Products, The NYS Center for Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences, AIDS Community Services, and Kraft Foods to name a few.

Her documentaries have dealt with the issues of Homeless Women and Children, Group Homes for the developmentally disabled, and the Special Olympics. They have aired on ABC, USA Network, CableVision VOD Network, and WNED-TV Buffalo/Niagara. Her garden series has been aired throughout the country as well as locally in Buffalo, New York. Jackie currently can be seen each Saturday on WGRZ-TV, NBC Buffalo, Daybreak Saturday program.

Albarella has served as the Executive Director of The Arts in Education Institute, modeled after the Lincoln Center Institute in NYC, and as the Executive Director of the Charles Burchfield Nature & Art Center.

Her many awards include: The New York State Broadcasters Award, National Telly Award and the National Garden Writers Association Award for broadcasting.

Jackie is the author of three books, which include a collection of humorous essays and her most recent book; The Hotel Lafayette: Restoring Louise Bethune’s Masterpiece. The Hotel Lafayette book follows with photographs and interviews, the restoration of architect Louise Bethune’s Masterpiece, and the companion film aired on WNED-TV, Buffalo/Niagara.

SUSAN ARBETTER is the Emmy Award-winning host and producer of the syndicated public radio program the Capitol Pressroom, which broadcasts live from the 3rd floor of the State Capitol in Albany weekdays from 11am to noon. Arbetter also holds the title Director of News & Public Affairs for Syracuse public broadcaster, WCNY.

Capitol Pressroom can be heard on over 20 NPR & non-commercial public radio stations throughout upstate New York in markets including Buffalo (WNED/WBFO), Rochester (WXXI), Syracuse (WRVO), Binghamton (WSKG) and Albany (WVCR). A digest of the week’s best radio segments can be heard every Sunday on WNYC sister station WQXW 90.3 FM in Westchester County. It has a listenership of 100K people each day.

Susan’s career has taken her from Boston University’s WTBU where she hosted a rock show called “AOR Wipeout”, to WBOS-FM in Boston where she began her professional news career, to Albany where she cut her teeth at WPYX/WTRY in the early nineties. After several years in commercial radio she fell in love with public broadcasting at WAMC Northeast Public Radio where she worked for 13 years, 6 of those as News Director. She is one of the creators and co-hosts of the award-winning Roundtable Show.

She had her first taste of television at WMHT, the PBS station which serves the capital region. There, she created, produced and hosted the political show New York Now as well as a number of statewide public television specials on issues ranging from the fall of former Governor Eliot Spitzer to veterans returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Susan is the recipient of over 30 awards for electronic journalism, including a 2013 Emmy Award for Best Public Affairs Series for the television show Insight and a 2016 Emmy nomination for Best Political Program, Connect: NY. She has also received one or more of the following awards for radio broadcasting: Edward R. Murrow, Scripps-Howard, AP, PRNDI & NYSBA, among others. The Capitol Pressroom is also the recipient of a 2016 NYSBA Award for Community Service and a 2016 Media Award from the Erie County Bar Association. Susan was also awarded the Women’s Press Club’s “Excellence in Career Achievement Award” in 2015. She has been named to City & State’s Annual Power 100 list every year since 2014 when the list began being published.

Over her career, Susan has been called a lot of things - some of the nicer ones include: “Communicator of the Year, 2015” by the Public Relations Society of America; “Best Local Radio Personality” by the Albany Times Union; “Best Laugh in the Valley” by Hudson Valley Magazine; and “Favorite Voice” by Berkshire Living Magazine.

Susan lives on a hill in Altramont, NY with her hunk of husband Bill Danielson, a Massachusetts public school science teacher who is also a nature writer & photographer.
ULLA BAK is a co-founder and president of BAK USA Technologies Corp., a mobile computer company in Buffalo, New York. In this role, Ulla is responsible for making critical decisions that propel the progression of the company.

Amid an eclectic collection of impressive achievements throughout her career, Ulla is a co-founder of Surtab SA, the first tablet PC manufacturing facility in Haiti; a co-founder of the Dania Foundation, a construction company dedicated to earthquake relief efforts; an adjunct professor of business law and ethics at Chatham University; a CEO & chief legal officer at EMX Corporation, a biotech company that has since moved from California to London; a chairwoman of Nebbelunde Ferring Foundation, a Denmark-based non-profit organization dedicated to building schools and homes in underdeveloped countries; a member of the board with the Women’s Foundation in Western New York; and a member of the board of directors with FreeFrom, Inc., a domestic violence advocacy and support organization.

Ulla has spoken and given lectures at various international conferences; earned at least five awards and certificates of recognition since 2004—the most prominent of which is her Congressional Recognition from the California State Assembly and House of Representatives in Washington D.C. She has also appeared on CNN News, MSNBC, “Good Morning India” (200 million viewers) and in Newsweek. Her new hometown of Buffalo, New York, has named her a Western New York “Woman of influence” and one of the region’s “Power 100 Women.”

Ulla earned her master’s in law from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and was admitted as a lawyer to the Supreme Court of Denmark while she was consolidating her own law firm in Copenhagen. Subsequent to her immigration to the U.S. in 1998, she graduated from the University of Pittsburgh Law School with an LLM degree, focusing on intellectual property law and constitutional law. She is married to J.P. Bak with whom she has two children, Eva and Christian Bak.

STEVEN BELL, Senior Vice President, Managing Director of Crisis and Reputation Management carved out a go-to public affairs practice dealing with pressing issues like health care, state policy, politics and economic development throughout his nearly 11 years at CRM. He leads EMA’s crisis and reputation management practice area, which also includes media, presentation and crisis training. In 2015, he was named head of EMA’s Buffalo office. Steve came to EMA in 2006 from The Buffalo News, where, as editorial page editor, his analyses and opinions helped affect public policy and influenced state, local and national politics. During 20 years at the News - upstate’s largest newspaper - Steve also served as managing editor, city editor and business editor.

He worked for the Associated Press in Albany and Buffalo before the News. As a senior member of EMA’s company-wide public affairs practice, Steve counsels clients regarding policy, media relations, crisis management, community and regulatory matters, as well as assisting in a full range of public relations services. In 2012, he started stevenoncrisis, a blog on crisis management found at stevenoncrisis.wordpress.com.

“We live in a world of instant communications with rules and habits that change daily. Social media can inflate a crisis, even based on lies and rumors, in moments. "Alternative facts," have now crept into our lexicon. Companies, leaders and organizations need to plan ahead for their inevitable crisis. Otherwise, they will be overwhelmed by a cascade of negative comment and criticism that can damage reputation, reduce sales and threaten a company’s future. The best-run companies prepare in advance for that really bad day.”
DR. GALE BURSTEIN, MD, MPH, FAAP, is the Erie County Commissioner of Health and a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the State University of New York’s School Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo.

She holds a B.S. degree in Mathematics and Biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY; received her Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree from State University of New York’s (SUNY) School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Buffalo; and gained her Masters in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, focusing on Maternal and Child Health. In addition, she is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

After completing her pediatric residency training, she began her public health career in 1993. Dr. Burstein directed the pediatric services in a large rural hospital in the Eastern Transvaal of South Africa. This was during that country’s history when the HIV/AIDS epidemic exploded throughout the country, Nelson Mandela was elected as South Africa’s first black president; and apartheid rule was abolished.

In 1999, Dr. Burstein’s public health career continued at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, where she served as a Medical Officer, conducting research and writing policy on adolescent sexual health care.

A Western New York native, upon her return to the area in 2005, she served in various roles at the Erie County Department of Health, including as the STD Clinic, TB Clinic and Epidemiology and Surveillance program Medical Director.

Dr. Burstein was appointed the Erie County Commissioner of Health in 2012. Her current focus is on developing strategies to change healthcare providers’ narcotics prescribing practices to prevent opioid addiction in Erie County. She also oversees a groundbreaking program that has significantly increased the availability of naloxone—to both first responders and community members—in order to prevent opioid overdose deaths. Between mid-2014 to mid-2015, well over 1,000 Western New York first responders were trained by the Erie County Department of Health to recognize signs of an opioid overdose and in the use of intranasal naloxone to prevent fatal opioid overdoses.

Dr. Burstein is an active member of New York State’s “Ending the AIDS Epidemic Task Force” that developed a strategic blueprint plan that will make New York State a national model for ending the HIV epidemic. As part of this effort, a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) program was developed to prevent HIV infection in high-risk persons in Erie County.

Dr. Burstein has coauthored American Academy of Pediatrics and Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine position papers on adolescent sexual health; has been published in peer review medical journals; and trains health care providers across the country to “routinize” adolescent sexual health care services in primary care.

Dr. Burstein and her family reside in Erie County where she practices what she preaches by swimming several days a week before her workday begins. She is available to speak on a multitude of public health topics, including the importance of childhood immunizations; eliminating healthcare treatment inequities; educating adolescents about sexual health and prevention of STDs; and making family planning services available and affordable for all.

MICHELLE CASEY, MPA, proudly serves as the President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, overseeing a robust health system which serves more than 30,000 patients annually, multiple education and youth programs and a sexual assault services program. She is also serving as President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes. Prior to her work at PPCWNY, she was the Chief Program Officer at the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency. In that role, Casey led the development and sustainment of the agency’s program-related initiatives. She also served as an advisor on innovation strategies to the New York State Department of Health.

An accomplished leader, Casey has experience in management, leadership, administration and teaching. She has held positions at the University of Rochester Medical Center, the Monroe County Department of Public Health, and PathStone and DePaul Community Services, where she currently serves as a member of the board of directors. She is also board chair of the Mental Hygiene Community Services Board for Monroe County Office of Mental Health, and an adjunct faculty member of the University of Rochester’s School of Public Health Sciences.

She is a proud champion of human rights and a devoted mother and wife.
DR. GLENNA C L BETT, FAHA, Glenna studied physics, then physiology at Oxford University, UK. She earned her PhD degree in the laboratory of Dr. Denis Noble, the acknowledged father of cardiac electrophysiologic simulation. During that time, she was an instrumental part of Dr. Noble’s pioneering commercial cardiac electrophysiology CRO, OXsoft Heart™. She also ran a computer consultancy, and installed and maintained computer services for several Oxford colleges. Glenna continued her career in ion channels and cardiac electrophysiology at the University of Buffalo, where she is vice chair for research in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Glenna leads a research team exploring the molecular basis of electrical activity in cells, and the effect of drugs on ion channels and cellular electrical activity. She uses molecular methods, electrophysiology, and mathematical analysis and computer modeling. She has been the recipient of grant awards from agencies and foundations such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, American Heart Association, March of Dimes, Whitaker Foundation, and Gates Foundation. She has held numerous positions and responsibilities while at UB, including chairing and participating in national and international grant awarding study sections at the NIH, American Heart Association, and other foundations. She has published over 50 peer review papers in leading journals.

Glenna is majority owner and cofounder of CytoCybernetics, a contract research organization using her novel Cybercyte technology, which brings a new efficiency to FDA-mandated drug safety screening. The Cybercyte technology is a significant advance in the drug development pathway, with the promise to reduce the likelihood of novel drugs having serious cardiac side effects, while reducing the cost of bringing new drugs to market.

JOAN K. BOZER earned a BA degree in history and government from SUNY Empire State College. After finishing her education she became a consistently active member of the Buffalo community by serving as president for the Junior League of Buffalo, the League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara, and Buffalo Friends of Olmstead Park (now known as Buffalo Olmstead Parks Conservatory). Joan’s formal political career spanned 9 terms, during which she served as an elected member of the Erie County Legislature and is remembered for her diligent conservation efforts. She continues her conservation and women’s activism through her participation with the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women’s Support Fund, by serving on the board of directors for Friends of Women’s Rights National Park Buffalo/Niagara Chapter, through her role as founder of the Women’s Pavilion for the Pan American Exposition Leadership Conference, as the board chair of the Trailblazing Women Speaker Series, and through her continued work with WNY Sustainable Energy Association.

MELISSA BROWN joined The Buffalo History Museum (TBHM) staff in 1998 as Collections Assistant; promoted to Collections Manager/Exhibit Researcher in 2003; and was appointed Director of Research & Interpretation in 2009. She became the Museum’s 11th Executive Director in 2011.

She effectively represents TBHM to its constituents and plays a leadership role in the region. Brown is an expert in managing collections and has consulted on over a dozen major exhibits at other WNY museums. Accomplishments include rebranding from The Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society to the welcoming “The Buffalo History Museum” during our 150th Anniversary. Additionally, 27 exhibits opened including “Inside Tim Russert’s Office,” individual giving increased by 40%, programs increased by 30%, and visitation has increased by 18%.

She received her M.A. in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University in 2000, adding to her 1995 B.A. in history and museum studies minor from SUNY Oswego.

Ms. Brown is a native of Gasport, NY and remains a loyal WNYer. Outside of work, she’s busy with her children—twin daughters, Madison (11) & Ellery (11) and son, Quinn (8). She enjoys visiting and stories; antiquing; up cycling; reading; researching and spending time with her large extended family.

SHELIA BROWN is the CEO of Vision Multi-Media and owner of WUFO 1080 AM radio. She started as an entry-level saleswoman at WUFO in 1986, moving to sales manager and then to owner of Buffalo’s oldest black-owned radio station, becoming the first African-American female radio owner in Buffalo, NY. She has also owned and operated four children’s clothing stores in the Allentown neighborhood and Central Park Plaza. She relocated the radio station from its longtime headquarters on LaSalle Avenue in the city’s University District to a state-of-the-art facility on Broadway as part of the African-American Heritage Corridor in Buffalo that also includes the Colored Musicians Club, the Nash House and Michigan Street Baptist Church. On October 29, 2015 Sheila released her first book entitled “29 Years of Preparation” a guide book to making your epic dream come true.
MODERATORS / PANELISTS

MELINA CARNICELLI is a retired public school educator and holds advanced education administration degrees from SUNY. She was born and raised in Auburn, NY and was first elected to local political office in 1995 as a member of Auburn City Council; in 1999 Melina was elected to a four-year term as Auburn’s mayor, the first and only woman thus far to hold that office. She has served on numerous community boards and currently is a Trustee at Cayuga Community College. In January, she led the planning and implementation of Women March in Seneca Falls 2017 and continues to serve a lead role with that group in organizing the FIRST AMENDMENT-FIRST VOTE! initiative for high school girls. Melina enjoys travel, cooking for family and friends, playing tennis, and working on a memoir of her Sicilian immigrant grandmother after whom she is named.

DIANA CIHAK has been involved in politics and political campaigns since she entered college at DePaul University in Chicago. She has worked on campaigns at all levels from School Board races to Presidential campaigns and was elected as a Delegate to the 2008 Democratic Convention. She has also been an entrepreneur and a supporter of numerous organizations that advocate for the empowerment of women and girls throughout her career. Diana is the Founder and Board President of WE PAC and the WomenElect program. WomenElect is a four-month leadership development program that works with qualified, pro-choice women to get them ready to run for public office. The course assists the women in assessing their inner strengths and external networks of support so that they can be ready to run successful campaigns that will benefit their communities. WE PAC is a political action committee that assists those women who graduate from the program when they are ready to throw their hat in the ring. The program, based in Buffalo, expanded to Rochester in 2016 and is set to further expand across New York State this fall.

Diana has been featured in the New York Times and the Buffalo News. She has appeared on Fox Business News, WGRZ, WBFO and the Canadian Network Television station CTS as well as in numerous local publications. Diana serves as the State Vice Chair for the Women’s Equality Party, the President of the Board of the Women’s Business Center at Canisius College, a member of the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women and a member of Women Events Buffalo. She is the President of Upper Edge Consulting, a government relations and grant writing agency. She lives in Buffalo with her three children.

ZANDRA A. CUNNIGHAM is the 16 year old Founder/CEO of Zandra and natural skin care line that inspires and donates up to 10% to educate girls, the Founder of the Zandra tlc Foundation/ Day of the Girl Buffalo Summit and the CEO of Young Mogul Prep School. Zandra is the youngest to graduate from the University At Buffalo CEL program.

As a TEDx speaker and the Small Business Administration’s Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Zandra became an international speaker before the age 15. She has been featured on Black Enterprise, NPR, Seventeen Magazine, Girls Life Magazine, INC, USA TODAY, Nickelodeon, The TODAY Show, The Harry Connick Jr. Show and ABC Nightline in addition to facilitating many entrepreneurial and product formulation workshops/presentations for BALLE, Canisius College, The University A Buffalo, Girls Scouts USA, Boys and Girls Club and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority to name a few.

Her mission is to provide entrepreneurial education, experiences, mentorship along with networking opportunities and access to programming that will enhance the lives of young people so they can become change makers within their families and community.

LEGISLATOR LYNNE DIXON is proud to represent the 9th District including the Town and Village of Hamburg, Village of Blasdell, City of Lackawanna and a portion of South Buffalo. Currently, Lynne is Chairwoman of the Health & Human Services Committee, also serving as Vice Chair of the Public Safety Committee, Government Affairs Committee and Minority & Women Business Enterprise Committee.

Her focus remains on providing residents with quality services while holding the line on taxes. Legislator Dixon is committed to maintaining the county’s infrastructure, advocating that investments be made in roads and bridges to resolve issues now before they become more costly down the road. Among her outreach efforts, Legislator Dixon supported the Social Host Law to hold homeowners responsible for providing alcohol to minors; the Yellow Dot program to aid accident victims who may not be able to relay their medical needs; Silver Alert initiative to locate missing adults; and the Cyber-bullying Law, which focuses on protecting youths that are harassed online.

Lynne spent 22 years as a journalist. For 12 years she was a general assignment reporter at WGRZ-TV. A resident of Hamburg, Lynne and her husband, Tim, have four children.
MODERATORS / PANELISTS

KRISTIN SYVANTEK GARVEYK became the Executive Director of the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW), in July 2008. Prior to joining ICW, Kristin worked at the International Center of Indianapolis for over nineteen years as a nonprofit practitioner and organizational strategist. As part of her responsibilities, she worked closely with the U.S. Department of State, coordinating professional itineraries for emerging leaders from over seventy countries. She recently was elected as President of the board of directors of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW). She also serves on the steering committee for the Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network for the city of Indianapolis and volunteers as an agency evaluator and evaluation team leader for the United Way of Central Indiana. Kristin was named a Hoosier Fellow by the Randall Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence in 2010. She has also participated in the United Way of Central Indiana’s Executive Women’s Leadership Series (2010), the Diversity Leadership Academy of Greater Indianapolis (2009), the Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service (2005-2006) and the Ardaith Burkhart Leadership Program (1998). Kristin received her M.S. in organizational leadership from Indiana Tech in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and her B.A. from Butler University in Indianapolis where she graduated cum laude with high departmental honors in International Studies and French.

KRISTEN GARVEY

SUSAN GOODIER studies U.S. women’s activism, particularly woman suffrage activism, from 1840 to 1920. She earned a master’s degree in Gender History in 1999, a doctorate in Public Policy History, with subfields in International Gender and Culture and Black Women’s Studies, in 2007, and a Women’s Studies master’s degree in 2008, all from SUNY at Albany. At SUNY Oneonta she teaches courses in Women’s History, New York State history, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and Progressivism.


SUSAN GOODIER

JOAN GRACI has lead a mission as a talent coach for visionary HR and industry leaders promoting growth and transparency, aiding corporations in building effective teams and enhancing talent brands. She has worked on the front lines of the employment world for 30 years, collecting data on the real problems growing organizations struggle with. After years of data collection and researching the difference between how leaders think and feel versus how job seekers and employees think and feel, she has become the only brain-based-certified talent coach in Western New York translating these differences. She has made an effort to bridge that gap and drive real results. Joan has taken a holistic approach to the talent management process and the ability to change behaviors. As a result her clients’ have experienced exponential growth in revenue goals, production levels, and retention rates.

She travels as a keynote speaker, attends numerous neuroscience summits to better understand employer-employee dynamics, and is a contributing writing for The Buffalo News. Joan’s passion remains the same: devising a complete human capital strategy capable of closing the communication gap so that employers and professionals can speak the same language again.

Joan received a brain-based certification from the NeuroLeadership Institute and completed the Women’s Leadership Development Program at University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. She is a graduate and former president of the University of Buffalo Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Alumni Association and remains an active member of the UB community, as well as a mentor and committee leader for the Canisius College Women’s Business Center. She also received a 2015 Woman of Influence award, issued by Buffalo Business First, which honors female entrepreneurs who have grown their business by making outstanding contributions to society.

JOAN GRACI
DR. ELLEN E. GRANT, PHD, LCSW-R, currently serves as Senior Vice President, Chapter Programming. Her major responsibilities include oversight of Say Yes Chapter cities (Buffalo, Syracuse, Guilford County, Greensboro, Highpoint, NC), as well as cohorts in NYC Harlem and Philadelphia. She also assists the national chapter in other national initiatives.

Ellen was appointed by Mayor Byron Brown in November 2012 to City of Buffalo Deputy Mayor where she served for over two years. Grant came to the post with over 25 years of experience in health, behavioral health, education and human services.

She was also Mayor Brown’s liaison to the Board of Education and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Grant worked closely with the Buffalo Police Department on its activities in and around schools, with Say Yes to Education, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, Mayor Brown’s summer reading program and other educational initiatives. In addition, she assisted with various economic development and health initiatives.

Dr. Grant is a licensed clinical therapist as well as an executive coach. Grant has a Ph.D. in communications and organizational behavior from the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNYAB), and served previously as Director of Cornerstone Manor/Buffalo City Mission, Vice President of Community Affairs at BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York and President and CEO of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. Grant was Commissioner of Mental Health during County Executive Dennis T. Gorski’s administration. She has faculty appointments at SUNYAB, departments of Psychiatry and Social Work.

She has one adult son living in Washington, DC.

HEATHER GRESHAM, JD, SPHR-SCP, is the Executive Director of the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (WIB). The WIB develops strategic workforce initiatives and oversees publicly funded workforce and training opportunities which are provided through five One Stop Career Centers in Buffalo and Erie County. For over twenty years, Heather has held leadership positions in Educational Program Administration, Human Resources, and Workforce Development. Heather’s community involvement includes serving in an advisory capacity for local organizations such as the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, Buffalo State College, Independent Health YMCA and the Charter School for Applied Technologies. Heather earned her Bachelors and Juris Doctor degrees from the University at Buffalo, and has been licensed to practice law in New York State since 2002.

HANNAH HOLDEN is the Community Coordinator for the Erie County Department of Social Services. As such, she staffs the Erie County New Americans Committee, a representative group of immigrants and refugees that meet monthly to discuss issues facing their communities. The members advise Erie County on how their services may better assist those communities. Ms. Holden holds a B.A. in Political Science from Middlebury College, and a M.B.A. from Canisius College.

MICHELLE HOLLER, Michelle is a Buffalo native and has been working as the West Side Bazaar Manager for the past three years. Michelle is very invested in community development and currently serves on two committees, the Grant Ferry Association and Community Canvases. Michelle has also been volunteering for the past two years with WEDI’s after school program ENERGY working with English language learners. Before WEDI, she attended Buffalo State College where she studied fashion textile technology with a concentration in marketing as well as studied abroad at the Florence University of the Arts. When asked about the West Side Bazaar, Michelle mentioned that she really loves the mission behind it. One of Michelle’s greatest passions is exploring other cultures. By the age of 27, Michelle had traveled to 18 different countries on four separate continents. Over the years, Michelle has learned that she can work with people from all over the globe and use the experience gained from previous jobs, and travels to help folks in the city of Buffalo.
DIANA KASTENBAUM  was born and raised in Batavia, New York. She attended Alexander Central School in Genesee County and college at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. where she earned her BA in Speech and Drama.

Diana became an entrepreneur and small business owner. She started her own information technology company which specialized in training and software development in the legal field. In addition, Diana has been an owner in her family business, Pinnacle Manufacturing Company, Inc. for 45 years. In 2014, she became CEO of the company.

Locally, Diana is a member of the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce. She previously served as Vice President to the Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council and The Landmark Society of Genesee County.

In addition to her business and community activities, Diana has devoted herself to numerous political endeavors. She aided Public Citizen fight against Citizens United while in Los Angeles, and later helped produce Public Citizen’s 40th Anniversary fundraiser, “Stand Up for Main Street,” in 2011. Diana also helped in the initial organization of VoteRiders, a non-profit dedicated to protecting citizens’ right to vote. While in Los Angeles, she served as a volunteer on Hillary Clinton’s bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2008. Diana herself ran for Congress in the 2016 election on the Democratic ticket in NY-27.

DIANE KASTENBAUM

DIANE KASTENBAUM

DR. MICHELLE KAVANAUGH, President, WNY STEM Hub, retired in 2013 after 37 years in education, the last 11 as a Superintendent of Schools. Michelle is a product of Buffalo Schools, Buffalo State College and the University at Buffalo where she obtained her doctorate.

Following retirement, Dr. Kavanaugh founded and continues to lead WNY STEM Hub as President. WNY STEM Hub an incorporated nonprofit and initiative of United Way that serves 700 individual members, 250+ cross-sector organizations. The organization facilitates collaboration in the region to engage learners of all ages in STEM education and STEM careers. Her work with WNY STEM Hub has included coordination and leadership with partnership organizations of the following: a girls’ coding and technology initiative, a STEM Career Exploration Program, a WNY STEAM Conference and a student spaceflight experiment project that led to national selection of 3 middle school girls whose experiment was recently launched to the International Space Station. She is currently facilitating launch of a summer program for high school students to design prosthetic 3D hands for local and global youth in need. The project is in collaboration with AT&T, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the UB Center for Integrated Global Biomedical Sciences and others. She has partnered with Siemens to recognize 83 school systems in the region for their emerging work in STEM.

During her service as a school system leader, she led numerous curriculum projects, launched pre-engineering programs, initiated an Early College/Career Technical Education Program, began robotics programs, established a college-level Health Certificate Career Pathway Program and led an inquiry-learning program that garnered awards from NYS as a School to Watch and the Whole Child Award. She boosted student enrollment in STEM courses and AP Exams leading to recognition by U.S. News as a Gold Medal School and the College Board as a Best U.S. STEM High School. She served on the Core Team to lead the Finger Lakes STEM Hub and continues to serve on the Leadership Team of the Empire State STEM Learning Network. Additionally, she has won awards for her work in process improvement, served as a national Examiner for the Baldridge Presidential Award and provides consultation services on performance excellence as well as executive leadership.

Since 2013, Dr. Kavanaugh received an Outstanding STEM Service Award, the Margaret Ashida STEM Leadership Award, a Service to Science Award and a “Women Touching the World Award”.

DR. MICHELLE KAVANAUGH
MODERATORS / PANELISTS

KAREN KING Ph.D., is the executive director of the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission works to provide meaningful information and resources to the women and girls of Erie County, to ensure that they participate fully in matters that have an impact on their lives. The Commission conducts policy studies, analyzes current legislation and programs and trends affecting women and girls, develops collaborative programs with local, regional and national organizations and public officials, provides educational awareness, and recommends measures to coordinate consolidation or expand the resources and services available to women and girls in Erie County.

Dr. King has served as an adjunct graduate faculty member in the Higher Education Student Affairs Administration Program at Buffalo State College and in the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo. Additionally, she has developed and taught courses and conducted numerous workshops on popular media culture, social justice advocacy, multicultural competency, privilege, gender, race and class. Dr. King’s research interests include examining how gender, race, class, and popular culture impact women’s and girl’s identity development.

SANDRA LAHRACHE is the Founder/President of The Teal Project, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit designed to strengthen education and prevention efforts to combat sexual violence and bring awareness to schools throughout WNY. It is her goal to positively effect change and inspire students to seek healthy relationships as well as avoid situations where they could become the victim or perpetrator of sexual violence. Additionally, Sandra began the "Thumbs Up! for Sexual Assault Awareness" campaign in 2016 which seeks to offer support, awareness and camaraderie to survivors of SV and the global support community through a fun and inspiring engagement project.

TAMARA Z. LEWIS is a trained organizational leader and licensed mortuary scientist. She recently retired from 15 years as the Chief Administrative Officer for a large medical practice. Tamara is also the Founder and CEO of The Zandra Grande, a business management consultant company that provides services to small business from medical practices to restaurants alike; moreover, she is also the CEO of Raising A Mogul LLC a consulting agency that provides parents the confidence, knowledge, and tools they need to raise their young moguls.

Tamara is a wife, daughter, sister and mother of five "superstar" change makers who are growing toward greatness.

KATHERINE LUCAS is the owner and executive producer of Buffalo Video Production, a full service video studio who serves local clients such as Roswell Park Patient Education, Greenfields, Cornerstone Credit Union, M&T Bank, and Trocaire College. Her studio has also done pro bono work for Riviera Theatre, YWCA of the Tonawanda’s, Stop Domestic Violence Initiative, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, American Heart Association, Buffalo Prep, Ujima Theater, and the Athena Awards. She is currently producing “Moving with Grace - A Practical Toolkit for Breast Cancer Survivors,” the first in a series of videos that aide breast cancer survivors throughout their healing journey. All of the women in the video are survivors, and it was produced, directed, shot, and edited by women. In addition to her work with video, Ms. Lucas also worked as a celebrity makeup artist for clients including Oprah Winfrey, Rick James, Eddie Murphy, Jon Bon Jovi, and Hillary Clinton, and co-created Beauty Never Sleeps, Bailey Cosmetics.

Ms. Lucas is the recipient of multiple awards including two Telly Silver Awards, Women in Leadership from NAWBO, and the Champion Award from Amherst Chamber of Commerce. She was also named an Honorary Chair of YWCA Stand Against Racism, as well as a Woman of Influence 2017.
MODERATORS / PANELISTS

ALTHEA E. LUEHRSEN was appointed as CEO of Leadership Buffalo in January 2012. Prior to her appointment to Leadership Buffalo, she was at the University at Buffalo for over ten years holding the positions of the Executive Director of UB’s Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Assistant Vice President for Corporate and Foundation Relations.

In addition to her work at Leadership Buffalo, Inc., Ms. Luehrsen is the President/Owner of Strategic Solutions Group specializing in strategic plan facilitation and small business consulting.

Althea is a graduate of the SUNY Empire (Empire State College) where she received both her BA and MA. She is adjunct faculty at Empire State as well.

Althea currently holds several board positions including Boys and Girls Club, Chairperson for Women United for UWBEC, Chair of the Empire State College Alumni Federation, Board member at Olmsted Center for Sight, Lt. Col. Matt Urban Hope Organization and CharitySTRONG.

Ms. Luehrsen is the recipient of number awards throughout her career, but most recently, she was named one of WNY Top 100 Power Women in 2016.

A lifelong resident of Western New York, Ms. Luehrsen believes that continuing to give back to her community is vital to the success of our region.

NNEKA MACGREGOR is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Women’s Centre for Social Justice, better known as WomenatthecentrE, a unique non-profit organization created by and for women survivors of gender-based violence globally. The organization strives to ensure that social policies and practice are responsive to the needs of women and their children fleeing abuse, by engaging survivors - because survivors are the experts!

Nneka is an advocate who works with governments and organizations to transform lives and build violence-free communities. In 2006, she was selected by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario as one of 13 experts tasked to review the range of services provided to women and children in the province, identify gaps and make recommendations. In June, 2016, she was appointed by the Canadian government to the Advisory Council on the Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence.

She sits on the Board of Trustees of the Girl Child Network Worldwide, a UK based charity that focuses on empowerment of the girl-child through education and the eradication of practices that impede their full physical, emotional and spiritual growth and development. She also sits on a number of Advisory Boards and Committees, including the Toronto Police Domestic Violence Action Plan Committee and the Toronto Regional (Crown) Domestic Violence Committee.

An entrepreneur with over 25 years business experience, Nneka is a Partner at Strateco Partners, a conscious capitalism consultancy firm dedicated to supporting organizations develop their strategy, people, culture, community as well as their profits, where she focuses on nurturing leadership.

Nneka is a member of the Board of Directors of Moatfield Foundation of Bayview Glen School, where she was Chair for six years and supports other charitable organizations with governance training and developing effective Board culture. She is a proud mother of three amazing children, Aly, Alexander and Christiana, and has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro twice, most recently in January of 2014, with her son, Alexander.

IRENE A. (TONI) MAJCHRZAK currently serves as the District Conference Chair for Zonta Clubs of Area 3 & 4 Centennial Celebration in the 100th year of Zonta. She has held many offices in Zonta, most notably serving twice as club President. In 2012, Zonta International placed heavy emphasis on Advocacy as one of three important committees. She became advocacy chair in her local club and then moved into Advocacy Chair for District 4 US, sharing the position with a Canadian Advocacy Chair. She remained Advocacy Chair for the Zonta Club of Buffalo until 2016, and remains a participating member within the club.

In addition to her involvement with Zonta, Mrs. Majchrzak works as a registered nurse and is celebrating 53 years of marriage with her husband. They have three children and four grandchildren.
MEGHAN MALONEY DE ZALVIDAR is a native of Buffalo, New York. She is currently the Senior Associate for Regional Outreach at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC). At the NYIC Meghan coordinates Western and Central New York where she works with NYIC members and partners to understand and advocate for the complex and diverse issues that immigrants face in this region. Before coming to NYIC, Meghan worked on Buffalo’s West Side for People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH). Prior to her work with PUSH, Meghan worked in El Salvador for the Center for Exchange and Solidarity. Meghan holds a BA from Hampshire College in Central American Studies and Popular Education.

MEGHAN M. DE ZALDIVAR

ISABEL MARCUS is a founder of the Institute for Research and Education on Women and Gender at UB. She served as chair of the Department of Women’s Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences from 1997 to 2002. She is on the board of directors of the Network of East-West Women, an international non-governmental organization. She received her J.D., M.A. in African studies and Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Marcus’ longstanding research interests have been in the area of family law, domestic violence and international women’s human rights. Her current research project is a comparative analysis of the implementation of law regarding domestic violence in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Marcus has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar (Romania 1997, Macedonia 2003-04), a fellow of the Bunting Institute, a participant in the Fulbright Senior Scholar Roster and an International Scholar for the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) Higher Education Support Program in Eastern Europe. She has taught extensively in universities in Eastern Europe (Poland, Russia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovakia and Georgia) and Asia (People’s Republic of China, India, Pakistan and Thailand). She currently teaches family law, comparative family, women’s human rights and topics in women’s rights.

ISABEL MARCUS

MICHELLE A. MARTIN has been an advocate for children and women for as long as she can remember. As a young girl she was inspired by her grandmothers and their lessons of paying it forward. Their influence fueled her passion for child advocacy and ensuring that students receive the best opportunities available for their academic, moral, social, and athletic growth.

In 2015, Michelle transitioned from an international financial institution to the no-profit arena. As the Community Development Manager with Girl Scouts of WNY, Michelle spends her days increasing community engagement between the Girl Scout Council and the 9 surrounding counties, as well as leading a dynamic group of recruiters that cover Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, and Cattaraugus County.

Michelle holds a BA in Government and African Studies from St. Lawrence University, as well as a Masters in Organizational Leadership from Medaille College. Her philanthropic roles include serving as Vice President for the Board of Directors for King Center Charter School and Chair of the Nomination Committee. She is also an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and of Communities of Giving Legacy Initiative Emerging Philanthropists of Color.

MICHELLE A. MARTIN
MODERATORS / PANELISTS

KELLY HAYES McALONIE, FAIA, LEED AP is the Director of Capital Planning at the University at Buffalo. Kelly has dedicated her career to educational architecture. She previously was Associate Vice President of Cannon Design, where served in their Education Practice. In 2011 Kelly and colleague Despina Stratigakos collaborated with Mattel on the design and launch of Barbie I Can Be...Architect. That year she also co-curated the first exhibit in 25 years on Louise Bethune, America’s first professional woman architect, at the Buffalo History Museum. She is currently writing a biography of Louise Bethune and has written widely on her for over ten years. She also speaks often about managing a disability in the workplace. Her Buffalo TEDx talk “The Power Dress” has received over 10,000 views. Kelly is serving a three-year term as a New York State representative on the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Strategic Council. She was the 2012 President of AIA New York State and 2008 president of AIA Buffalo/WNY. She is also a member of the Richardson Center Corporation Board of Directors, charged with overseeing the restoration of the Richardson Olmsted Complex and Vice-Chair of the (Lipsey) Buffalo Architecture Center, which will be located in this complex.

Kelly was admitted to the AIA College of Fellows in 2016, the first successful woman candidate from Buffalo since Louise Bethune became a Fellow in 1889. In 2012 she was the recipient of the AIAANYS Del Gaudio Award and in 2011 she won the EB Green Distinguished Service Award from AIA Buffalo/WNY. In 2008 she was a recipient of the American Institute of Architect’s National Young Architects Award and in 2006 she won the Young Architect of the Year Award in AIA Buffalo/WNY. She holds a Master of Architecture degree from Dalhousie University where she received the Alumni Award.

TAMARA L. McMILLAN is an author and award winning Lecturer at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at SUNY Buffalo State. Additionally, she consults as a trainer and facilitator in creativity, leadership development, diversity, retention and empowerment. Tamara is qualified in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory, FourSight, and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. She designs and delivers workshops in the above areas for the public sector, educators, students and the business community.

Tamara teaches two courses; one in the nature and nurture of Creativity and Disruptive Change Leadership and another in mastering the academic environment. As a consultant, she provides workshops, presentations, keynote addresses and training events for such organizations as Kennesaw State University, University at Buffalo, Soledad O’Brien’s Starfish Foundation, National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), LEAD365, Harford Community College, Iowa State University, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Workplace Options, Department of Labor (Hamburg), Medaille College, North Carolina A&T and Colleges in the SUNY system. Other clients have included Steve Tasker Self-Leadership Experience camp, Dress for Success Erie and Child and Family Services of Erie County.

Known for her presence, Tamara was one of ten speakers for the inaugural TEDx BuffaloWomen conference held in Buffalo, New York in December 2012. She was also a contributing writer for an online magazine that highlights, supports and empowers women. Stiletos on the Glass Ceiling has been named top 100 best career websites by Forbes magazine in 2013. Tamara offered guidance and suggestions under the Career column.

Tamara’s background is diverse. She has been a pharmaceutical senior sales executive, advertising agency, HP and Sun UNIX sales representative, and student employment coordinator. In her spare time, Tamara likes to read, journal and travel.

Tamara is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and CSPFA. She holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science degrees both from SUNY Buffalo State. A certificate of advance studies in Creativity and Change Leadership from SUNY Buffalo State College (May 2017). She’s also a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Policies program at the University at Buffalo.
BARBARA MILLER-WILLIAMS currently serves as the 1st District Erie County Legislator. She was the first African American Woman to serve as Chairperson of the Erie County Legislature. She is a former Ellicott District Councilmember and continues to serve as an advocate with a passionate voice for the revival of Buffalo.

Legislator Miller-Williams is honored to have served our Country as a Master Sergeant/Equal Opportunity Advisor in the United States Army Reserve where she retired in 2016. She is also a former Buffalo Police Officer (Retired) serving the Community for over 29 years. Ms. Miller-Williams holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and Masters of Science Degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration. She is a graduate of Leadership Buffalo Class of 1995 and 1997 and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc., Gamma Phi Omega Chapter, Harriet Tubman 300’s, Inc., Judges and Police Conference of WNY, Afro-American Police Association, N.A.A.C.P., Buffalo Urban League, and the Buffalo Place Board of Directors. She continues to progressively serve her community and is active in the religious, educational and civic communities.

She has been noted for her Leadership and Community Achievement as the recipient of numerous Service Awards. Ms. Miller-Williams was recently selected to receive the New York State Association of Black & Puerto Rican Legislators Arthur O. Eve Service Award, Black Achievers in Industry Award, Women for Effective Change Golden Flame Award, Los Tainos Ana Cotton Award, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Service Award, True Bethel Invisible Soldier Award, Afro-American Police Community Trail Blazer Award, Uncrowned Queen Award and the WBLK/93.7 Radio Professional of the Month Award.

Ms. Barbara Miller-Williams’ favorite quote is “I am just an Ordinary Woman who has been blessed to do Extraordinary things” and her motto for leadership is “Always be ready to serve the community!” A lifelong resident of Buffalo, Ms. Miller-Williams worships at Saint John Baptist Church and is also family oriented; a proud parent of two daughters and four grandchildren who remains dedicated to helping to move our community forward and advocate for a better future for all children and families throughout Erie County.

HANA MIRACH is the Director of Resettlement at Journey’s End Refugee Services, Inc., a not-for-profit agency that assists refugees resettled in Buffalo, New York. She has devoted over six years to Journey’s End and her clients, motivating and encouraging refugees to be independent and self-sufficient members of our community. A refugee herself, Hana is dedicated to serving refugee populations, and previously worked for UNHCR in Cairo, Egypt. Hana also worked as an accountant for seven years in her home country of Eritrea, and has a Bachelor Degree in Accounting from University of Asmara. Hana and her husband are the parents of four lovely children.

BEVERLY COOPER NEUFELD, envisioned and launched PowHer New York in 2014 in order to address the slow advancement of women’s economic issues, a community working across typical barriers to connect organizations and issues, energize a movement, and accelerate progress. It is one of many innovative projects created by Beverly Neufeld, President of BCN Consulting Group LLC, which helps nonprofits create change through advocacy, programming, and organizational development. A strong proponent of working across sectors, she is proud to be a member of the NYC Commission on Gender Equity.

Neufeld leads a decade long Equal Pay Campaign, now a signature project of PowHer New York, which influenced the passage of the NYC Salary History bill in April 2017 and the 2015 NYS Equal Pay Act and the Women’s Equality Act. In 2016, working with 2020 Women on Boards and Catalyst, she rallied passage of a NYC Board Diversity Law for contractors and is pursuing similar state legislation.

In September 2016, with 100+ groups, under her leadership “PowHer The Vote” was launched, a 10-week interactive program and social media campaign, to ignite and empower a state-wide legion of activists to champion women’s issues during the 2016 election season and beyond. A member of the national Paycheck Fairness Taskforce and the steering committee of the 850-member NYS Women’s Equality Coalition, Neufeld is working on the federal, state and local fronts.

Previously, as President of the New York Women’s Agenda, Neufeld invigorated the 20-year old institution with innovative programming, including and the New York Women’s Business Principles Initiative. As Executive Director of The White House Project, she oversaw research on women’s leadership, and helped develop SheSource and “Vote, Run, Lead.” Beverly was Finance Director for Congresswoman Nita Lowey. Her board service includes 2020 Women on Boards, Free the Children, Sing for Hope, Women’s Campaign Forum, and Westchester Children’s Association.
MARY KATE O'CONNELL

NANCY H. NIELSEN, MD, PHD, is senior associate dean for health policy and clinical professor at the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences where she advises UB leadership and faculty on issues that affect health care in Western New York and in the nation. She is currently chairing the university's Addictions Initiative, aimed at bringing the latest in addiction science, clinical care and education to the region.

Dr. Nielsen is a nationally recognized authority in medicine and an outspoken advocate for the uninsured and affordable health insurance for all Americans. She is a sought-after media commentator on issues of public health, physician responsibility and the need for high quality health care.

A past president of the American Medical Association, Nielsen served for two years as senior advisor in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services before returning to UB in 2013.

In addition to her experience as a clinician and a leader in academic and organized medicine, she has been a board member of numerous stakeholder organizations, including the National Patient Safety Foundation, the National Quality Forum, and Kaleida Health. Previously she was chief medical officer for Independent Health, a health insurance plan headquartered in Buffalo. She currently serves on the boards of Great Lakes Health, the P2 Collaborative of WNY and Buffalo's Center for Hospice and Palliative Care.

She holds a doctorate in microbiology from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and a medical degree from UB. She is an internist and infectious disease specialist.

She is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine.

MARY KATE O'CONNELL is a life long resident of WNY, an award winning actress & community leader and director is the Executive/Artistic Director of O'Connell & Company. O'Connell & Company, now in residence at The Park School of Buffalo is marking its 20th Anniversary year for original and creative theatrical programming. O'Connell & Company produces a full season of musicals, revues, cabarets, concerts, plays and special presentations as well as benefit performances for charitable organizations throughout the season.

The Award winning DIVA by DIVA: A Celebration of Women! is Western New York’s longest running theatrical production. Mary Kate O’Connell, has created a fast-paced cabaret-style format of songs, readings, poetry, humor and quotes by, for, and about women. “DIVA by DIVA...” was originally scheduled to run for two weeks and now, 18 years later, audiences still flock to share in the “DIVA experience.” The show is “gender specific” but not “gender exclusive” ... men enjoy it too!

The ever changing “DIVA by DIVA...” cast is drawn from all aspects of the Western New York community ... performing arts, the business & corporate arena as well as the private & philanthropic sector - making this an extraordinary network of remarkable women. At any given performance the cast of “DIVA by DIVA...” can range in size from seven to 27 and might include a politician, a singer, a teacher, an actress, an international banker, a cancer survivor ... a sister, a daughter, a mother, a friend. All of these women join together, giving their voice and talent to, as O'Connell puts it, “redefining the DIVA ... it’s a happening, really.” Over the years more than 300 women have been a part of the DIVA by DIVA...” cast and it has proven to be the perfect fund raising tool. DIVA performances have helped raise money and interest for women & children’s charities in the WNY community. No two shows have ever had exactly the same cast or the same script. Performers arrive an hour before the show, dressed in “DIVA” black and sparkly jewelry, they gather, chatter, get their scripts, a few directors notes and on with the show.

KELLY O'NEILL is an owner and personal Financial Advisor at Lighthouse Financial Asset Management, LLC where she serves a diverse network of women decision makers and breadwinners working to integrate their finances with their purposes. For the past 17 years, Kelly has enjoyed collaborating with her individual clients designing personal financial plans that translate complex financial matters into smart, simple, and straight-forward strategies. Her advice focuses on transforming financial behaviors and biases, and, abilities and actions, through the relational and operational work needed to reach purpose filled outcomes. Kelly readily shares that it is the deep fulfillment she finds in facilitating inclusive female financial education and empowerment that has led her career path and volunteer service.

Before launching Lighthouse Financial in early 2015, Kelly had a long tenure at Edward Jones, a national full-service brokerage firm. It was here that her passion for developing and supporting women in business earned her the invitation to serve in several leadership positions and leadership development roles. She initially began serving as a mentor, and quickly took on the responsibility as a trainer for new financial advisors. Then, several separate coaching positions helping new and more advanced financial advisors grow their businesses, serve more clients and build profitable practices. From there, Kelly served in several capacities supporting the firm’s growth efforts including, the recruiting and hiring of new financial advisors, and, serving as the leader of the “Women’s Initiative for New Growth Strategies”; a program aimed at attracting women to the traditionally male-dominated career opportunity of a financial advisor. Throughout serving in all these roles, Kelly consistently ranked in the top 25% of the firm for client service excellence in her client practice.

Today, in addition to continuing to serve her clients at Lighthouse Financial, Kelly shares her time and enthusiasm with NAWBO Buffalo Niagara (National Association of Women Business Owners) and the Western New York Girl Scouts. Kelly is a voting member of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara, as well as a Board Member and Chair of the Corporate and Economic Development Committee. And, she newly serves on the Board of the Western New York Girl Scouts.

Kelly earned her bachelor's degree in Human Services and Psychology from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and worked in human services and social work before her career in financial services.
JUDITH OLIN, ESQ., joined the faculty in 2016 to direct the Family Violence and Women’s Rights Law Clinic. Her legal career has been dedicated to advocacy on behalf of victims of family violence. In her years as a legal services attorney, she focused on the representation of victims of domestic violence in divorce and child custody cases and initiated impact litigation leading to reform in the Buffalo Police Department’s policies in domestic violence cases. Olin went on to become an Erie County prosecutor specializing in domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault cases. As Director of the Lee Gross Anthone Child Advocacy Center, Olin led a multidisciplinary team that coordinated child abuse investigations for Erie County. Olin chairs the Domestic Violence Committee of the Women’s Bar Association of Western New York and serves on The Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence and the local Rape Crisis Advisory Board.

JENNIFER J. PARKER, as the owner Jackson Parker Communications, is known for providing customized services that exceed expectations. The Public Relations firm has been successful pitching creative angles for newsworthy stories and developing effective campaigns that incorporate print, video, outdoor signage, radio, internet and social media. Ms. Parker has been successful in creating a number of campaigns and events that have become brand builders. The firm has introduced newsworthy and memorable program brands such Think Big with 43North (encouraging minority and women entrepreneurship), I’m a Woman in Charge (Family Planning program targeted to women), Taking Care of You (medical outreach campaign to minority community), Success Looks Like Me (program designed to provide urban youth of color access to successful professionals of color).

In addition, Jennifer is the founder of the Black Capital Network LLC., a small business consulting company that provides services to support minority business development. Under Ms. Parker’s leadership, the Black Capital Network has hosted an annual Economic Empowerment Conference, networking events and a business speaker series featuring national business leaders. Embracing education and lifelong learning, she is a graduate of SUNY at Buffalo Law School and Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Energized by making things happen and the love of community, Jennifer has received a number of professional and community awards. Projects have included the development of the Buffalo Book Fair and BUFFALO CITY FORUM, a lunchtime speaker series, in collaboration with Leadership Buffalo and WNED 970 AM (an NPR Radio station).

In 2011, Jennifer was selected by Governor Andrew Cuomo to serve on the WNY Regional Economic Council, where she served as the Chair of the Tourism Workgroup. She is a former board member of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and served for 3 years as the Chair of the Communities of Giving Legacy Initiative, a philanthropy fund led by leaders of color. Currently she serves as the board marketing chair for the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County and co-communications chair on the WNY Women’s Foundation Board. Other community boards have included WNED Television, the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau, where she was the first female and African American Chairperson, Leadership Buffalo, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and the Advisory Board for Canisius College Women’s Business Center.

As a power networker she understands the importance of networking, building relationships and working to make a difference.

LINDA PELLEGRINO, has been hosting AM Buffalo on WKBW-TV for over 20 years, conducting thousands of live interviews with personalities ranging from the biggest Hollywood Stars to British Royalty. In addition, Linda contributes feature stories to the program. Previously she was a popular Reporter and Weathercaster for Eyewitness News. For her outstanding work, Linda has been nominated twice for New York State Emmy Awards.

Also a busy voice-over talent, Linda is heard locally and internationally on many radio and television commercials. Outside the station, Linda leads a very busy life in the community. Among her many charitable interests, Linda has served as Honorary Chairperson for the physically and emotionally handicapped at Buffalo’s Heritage Centers. She personally worked with the late Dave Thomas on the “Adopting Hope” Campaign with Wendy’s Restaurants. She served on the Board of Directors with the “Hunter’s Hope” Foundation. She is a strong proponent of Animal Adoption and currently serves on the Board of Directors with the “Hunter’s Hope” Foundation. She is a strong proponent of Animal Adoption and currently serves on the Board of Directors with the “Hunter’s Hope” Foundation.

Making her home in Western New York for over 30 years, Linda is a graduate of Rockland Community College, SUC Brockport and completed some Graduate studies at Mississippi State College. Linda and her husband, Bob have also hosted International trips with Holiday Vacations accompanying viewers to Alaska, Hawaii and Europe. Their son, Brett, is a recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and will attend Grad school locally.

Linda continues to inspire her viewers after her diagnosis of breast cancer and thyroid cancer in 2012. Linda shared her story and her recovery which included conversations with doctors, chemotherapy treatment, and hair loss. After thyroid surgery left her with a permanently paralyzed vocal cord, Linda chronicled this surgery and recovery as well.

In 2013, Linda was inducted into the Buffalo Broadcasting Hall of Fame. She aspires to be a positive role model for all women, reminding them to be pro-active for their own good health.
HON. ERIN M. PERADOTTO


CRYSTAL D. PEOPLES-STOKES

HAS FAITHFULLY SERVED AS ASSEMBLY MEMBER IN NEW YORK STATE’S 141st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT SINCE 2003. AN ADVOCATE WITH CLEAR AND PRINCIPLED SERVICE, SHE HAS ALWAYS PUT POLICY BEFORE POLITICS. CRYSTAL CONTINUES TO FEARLESSLY FIGHT FOR DIVERSITY, SPECIFICALLY IN MAKING SURE MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES HAVE A FAIR CHANCE IN OBTAINING STATE CONTRACTS. BEYOND DIVERSITY AND MWBE, THE ASSEMBLYWOMAN’S PASSIONS INCLUDE EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE.

IN FEBRUARY 2015, SHE WAS APPOINTED AS CHAIR OF THE ASSEMBLY’S COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS WHICH MAINTAINS OVERSIGHT ON ETHICS REFORM AND FOIL REQUESTS, STATE POLICE, HOMELAND SECURITY, DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, MWBE, CRIME VICTIMS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MILITARY AND NAVAL AFFAIRS. SHE SITS ON THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES: ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE; ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION; HIGHER EDUCATION; INSURANCE; AND RULES. SHE WAS ALSO RECEIVEDLY SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE WORKING GROUPS ON THE ELECTRONIC ASSEMBLY CHAMBER PROJECT AND TO STRENGTHEN ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS AND PROMOTE GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES THE WOMENS CAUCUS; AND BLACK, PUERTO RICAN, HISPANIC & ASIAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS. FROM 2013 TO 2015, SHE SERVED AS CHAIR OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK & PUERTO RICAN LEGISLATORS, WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ORGANIZING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE WEEKEND TO RAISE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR. SHE IS A FORMER EDUCATOR, ADMINISTRATOR, COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, AND ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATOR WHOSE VISION IS TO UPLIFT, NURTURE AND PROTECT HER CONSTITUENTS, THE CITY OF BUFFALO, AND THE WESTERN NEW YORK REGION. A STaunch Advocate, SOME OF HER NOTABLE SUCCESS INCLUDE SECURING $28 MILLION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER’S NEW FACILITY IN DOWNTOWN BUFFALO; $2 MILLION FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MICHIGAN STREET AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CORRIDOR TO PROMOTE CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND TOURISM; THE ADVOCACY AND CLEAN UP OF 858 EAST FERRY’S TOXIC WASTE SUPERFUND SITE; SECURING HEAL-NY FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE BUILDING OF A NEW HOME FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER OF BUFFALO; ADVOCATING FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ST. MARTIN’S VILLAGE; PROCURING $50 MILLION TOWARDS BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN 2017. SHE WAS PRESENTED WITH AN HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREE BY MEDAULLE COLLEGE IN MAY 2017. ASSEMBLY MEMBER PEOPLES-STOKES ATTRIBUTES HER ACHIEVEMENTS AND ABILITIES TO HER STRONG FAITH AND FAMILY. SHE IS A MEMBER OF BOTH TRUE BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH AND ST. LUKES AME ZION CHURCH AND CURRENTLY RESIDES IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK WITH HER HUSBAND.
JAMILA PERRITT, MD MPH FACOG, is a board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist who specializes in Family Planning and Reproductive Health.

Dr. Perritt is a graduate of Howard University College of Medicine and completed her residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, PA. She completed a Family Planning Fellowship at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. During her fellowship training, Dr. Perritt received a Masters Degree in Public Health from The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. After completion of her fellowship, she returned to her hometown of Washington, DC where she served as the Medical Director at Planned Parenthood Federation of America from 2011-2016.

Dr. Perritt works as a clinical provider in Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia. Additionally, she serves as a reproductive health care consultant where she develops, organizes and facilitates health education workshops and outreach events to diverse communities and community partners on topics including but not limited to HIV/STI treatment and prevention, reproductive justice and access to care, adolescent health, contraception and family planning. She collaborates with various organizations to provide ongoing support and subject matter expertise on sexual and reproductive health, family planning and reproductive justice.

Dr. Perritt is on the faculty for the Fellowship in Family Planning at Washington Hospital Center and at Howard University College of Medicine. She is a passionate advocate for reproductive health, rights and justice. She works closely with Physicians for Reproductive Health, Advocates for Youth, Reproductive Health Technologies Project and Planned Parenthood Federation of America on other organizations.

Dr. Perritt is a Fellow of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a member of The Association of Reproductive Health Professionals and a Junior Fellow of The Society of Family Planning. She serves on the ACOG Committee for the Health Care for Underserved Women and as liaison to the ACOG Committee on Gynecologic Practice.

JENNIFER PRISK, founded Prisk Communication in 1990 to provide exemplary public speaking and communication skills. She has coached hundreds of individuals and corporate teams in the United States and internationally. Jenni is a dynamic motivational speaker.

Jenni was born and raised in New Zealand. She has a Diploma in Adult Teaching and qualified as a Human Relations and Communications Instructor for the New Zealand Marriage Guidance Council. She has a Diploma in Speech & Drama from Trinity College, London, England.

Jenni is the co-author of Communication Skills Training, published by ASTD. For six years she was a faculty professor at the University of San Diego in the Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program. In collaboration with PRIDE Inc. San Diego, she developed and led a recurring course in public speaking for developmentally disabled adults.

Jenni is Chair of the San Diego County Commission on the Status of Women. In July 2016, she was elected as President of the Association of California Commissions on the Status of Women (ACCW). She is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Women Peacemakers’ Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at USD. She is an advisory member of the Women’s Regional Network of South Asia, who assist IDPs.

In 2001, Jenni founded Voices of Women (VOW), a nonprofit organization with the Mission to support and promote local and global educational programs that uplift and empower women and children. VOW presented 80+ educational events, and raised funds for global nonprofit organizations including the Daraja Academy for Girls in Kenya.

Jenni is a co-founder of iVOW, a Podcast Program featuring voices of global women. www.voicesofwomen.org. Jenni is a member of the San Diego Rotary Club where she chairs the Peace Committee. In 2013, she received the Rotarian of the Quarter award. Jenni is a member of Lawyers Club of San Diego.

Jenni was a speaker for TEDx SDSU; she has emceed TEDx programs. She is featured in a SUE Talk on YouTube. For two decades she anchored (live) KPBS-TV San Diego fundraisers and interviewed numerous guests: Dr. Ken Blanchard, Sarah Brightman, Paul Anka, John Tesh, Patti LuPone, Dr. Wayne Dyer, Dr. Andrew Weil (and more.) Jenni is a theatre critic – you can read her reviews on Scene by Jenni Prisk on FaceBook.

GRACE PROTOS, is the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau representing the interests of several million working women across 19 states and territories. In her role Grace designs and oversees the implementation of policy, research and projects devoted exclusively to promoting the advancement of working women. Her role also includes developing organizational channels for Women’s Bureau partnerships and collaborative opportunities with companies, community-based organizations and state and local governments. Before joining the Women’s Bureau, Grace was a senior vice president at MacKenzie Partners, Inc., a corporate advisory services firm, where she worked on corporate mergers, acquisitions and stakeholder identification and communications for clients who were Fortune 500 companies. She has a master’s degree in social work from Columbia University with a focus on organizations and women’s issues.
SHERI SCAVONE is the Executive Director of the WNY Women's Foundation. In her role, Ms. Scavone uses Foundation research data to educate, convene, advocate and forge collaborations with key community stakeholders about gender bias and other issues preventing girls and women from achieving economic self-sufficiency. She leads the Foundation to empower young girls, single mothers and aspiring female leaders through strategic initiatives and investments. Ms. Scavone is a tireless advocate for girls and women.

Sheri has over 30 years of experience leading and growing public and nonprofit organizations and advocating for causes. She currently volunteers her time to assist on the Board of Directors of SEFCU financial institution and the Gay and Lesbian Youth Services of WNY as well as with the Steering Committee of Save WNYCPC, Russell Sage College Annual Fund, University at Buffalo School of Social Work Dean's Advisory Council, and as a member of Leadership Buffalo and many community organizations.

Ms. Scavone is a licensed physical therapist (Russell Sage College), earned an MS Executive Leader degree in Health Systems Administration (Rochester Institute of Technology) and has an advanced post-graduate certificate in Palliative Care (The Sage Colleges). Ms. Scavone is currently in the Health Foundation of Western and Central NY Health Leader Fellowship and Trauma Informed Champion programs. Sheri is the former Director of the Cancer Services Program for the NYS Department of Health/Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, former President/CEO of Gilda's Club Capital Region, Chief Development Officer at Bellevue Women's Hospital, VP/COO WNY Physical & Occupational Therapy Group and served as Senior Administrator-Surgical Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

As a women's college graduate and mother of twins, Ms. Scavone is passionate about harnessing the incredible resources of women to strengthen our community! Sheri, a native Western New Yorker, is honored to have joined the WNY Women's Foundation in January, 2014.

SABINA RAMSEY helps entrepreneurs and businesses become brand leaders. In 2008, Sabina launched her company Insight, a digital design firm, to help companies develop a strategy to increase brand awareness and engagement in the digital space. With over 13 years in web programming and business development, Sabina is dedicated to inspiring and empowering women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs to pursue their professional goals. An active member in the community, Sabina lead the Buffalo Niagara chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners to become the fastest growing chapter in the nation increasing its membership with 80% in one year.

LAURA RYAN, has a BS in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters of Creativity and Change Leadership, Laura is a strategy and innovation catalyst. She engages groups in creative problem solving and strategic planning to address complex initiatives. The combination of global experience and vast record facilitating large scale challenges, provides a proven track record of guiding groups through conceiving, developing and executing innovative strategies.

Laura loves BIG IDEAS. As the founder of BAMH (Behavioral and Mental Health Consortium), Laura is working with several decision makers in our WNY community to bring about change for individuals with intellectual disabilities also facing mental and behavioral health challenges. Laura is the VP of Innovation for People Inc. and proudly serves on the Foundation Board of The Summit Center. In addition to her advocacy work, Laura is also the President of LAMA Inc., an organization which trains local companies to embrace unique and creative approaches to problem solving and progress. Through LAMA Inc., Laura has worked with a multitude of local clients such as PepsiCo, Fisher-Price, Ingram Micro, University at Buffalo Law School, Greatbatch, and the WNY Women's Foundation.

SHERI SCAVONE is the Executive Director of the WNY Women's Foundation. In her role, Ms. Scavone uses Foundation research data to educate, convene, advocate and forge collaborations with key community stakeholders about gender bias and other issues preventing girls and women from achieving economic self-sufficiency. She leads the Foundation to empower young girls, single mothers and aspiring female leaders through strategic initiatives and investments. Ms. Scavone is a tireless advocate for girls and women.

Sheri has over 30 years of experience leading and growing public and nonprofit organizations and advocating for causes. She currently volunteers her time to assist on the Board of Directors of SEFCU financial institution and the Gay and Lesbian Youth Services of WNY as well as with the Steering Committee of Save WNYCPC, Russell Sage College Annual Fund, University at Buffalo School of Social Work Dean's Advisory Council, and as a member of Leadership Buffalo and many community organizations.

Ms. Scavone is a licensed physical therapist (Russell Sage College), earned an MS Executive Leader degree in Health Systems Administration (Rochester Institute of Technology) and has an advanced post-graduate certificate in Palliative Care (The Sage Colleges). Ms. Scavone is currently in the Health Foundation of Western and Central NY Health Leader Fellowship and Trauma Informed Champion programs. Sheri is the former Director of the Cancer Services Program for the NYS Department of Health/Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, former President/CEO of Gilda's Club Capital Region, Chief Development Officer at Bellevue Women's Hospital, VP/COO WNY Physical & Occupational Therapy Group and served as Senior Administrator-Surgical Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

As a women's college graduate and mother of twins, Ms. Scavone is passionate about harnessing the incredible resources of women to strengthen our community! Sheri, a native Western New Yorker, is honored to have joined the WNY Women's Foundation in January, 2014.
PEG SIMONS grew up in a loving family in Western New York, and later moved away to get her degrees in Chemical Engineering and Environmental Engineering. She met and married a man who verbally, psychologically and physically abused her. Returning to Buffalo gave her the strength to leave the abuse. Peg volunteers with the Family Justice Center of Western New York to tell her story and encourage others to leave abuse and find “the rest of their lives”. She continues to use her thirty years of professional environmental and safety engineering skills as the Environmental, Health and Safety Manager at ThermoFisher Grand Island, New York.

KATHARINE SMITH is the owner of White Rabbit Design, a design and creative agency specializing in branding, graphic design, and copywriting. A native Western New Yorker, Katharine received her B.S. in Graphic Design from SUNY Buffalo State. In 2015, she launched Buffalo Gals, a product line of Buffalove-themed prints, gifts, and note cards. Katharine is immediate past president of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc.; founding member and past president of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara (National Association of Women Business Owners); steering committee chair of Women in Leadership (a WKBW-TV partnership with NYS Women, Inc.); past board member and current PR co-chair of the Rotary Club of Buffalo; and NYS Women, Inc. past board member and current associate editor of NIKE, the organization’s quarterly magazine. She is a member of the Leadership Buffalo Class of 2013.

“There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.”

- Malala Yousafzai
SARA VESCIO has been serving as the Executive Director for the Women's Business Center (WBC) at Canisius College since November of 2013, and served as the Program Director for a year prior. Sara leads the Center with a vision to create connections and collaborations that support economic opportunities, and programs that drive business growth, for women through all stages of business ownership.

Sara has developed many relationships within the business community of Western New York in an effort to pool these resources into the Center's programming and provide the greatest impact for the area's entrepreneurs. Connections with collaborative partners such as Canisius College, the Small Business Administration (SBA) Buffalo District's resource partners, Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA), Launch NY, local lenders, corporate sponsors and other business owners are what contribute to making the Women's Business Center the “home of women entrepreneurship.” Sara grew up in a family full of entrepreneurs and while she runs the small business called the Women's Business Center she faces many of the struggles her clients face, such as limited resources in time, team members and money. With that in mind, Sara’s commitment is to offer innovative programs with thorough content delivery that focuses on solutions for hurdles women business owners face. Each WBC program offers education and support leaving the business owner empowered to grow their business to the level of success they desire.

Sara’s hard work is reflected in the WBC’s clients’ numbers. Last year the Center helped create 13 new businesses, 28 new jobs, and these supported businesses grossed about $21 Million in sales and saw an increase in profits of $1.1 Million over their prior year in sales.

Prior to joining the WBC, Sara had a career in fundraising. She served as the Director of Development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northtowns for 5 years. Here she created a full development program to include: marketing and community awareness, events and sponsorships, staff giving, estate giving, alumni and community support.

Sara was also a fundraiser for five years at Niagara University (NU). At NU she developed a collaborative fundraising initiative amongst the development professionals to focus on reunion giving as an opportunity to substantially increase revenue through alumni giving. She also developed a new Parent's campaign to create a new level of engagement for the participating families and a new revenue stream for the university.

JACQUIE WALKER has been news anchor at WIVB-TV Channel 4 for 34 years – the only woman in Buffalo broadcasting history who has celebrated this milestone at one television station. She anchors News 4 at 5 & 6 and the #1 rated News 4 at 11 p.m. For her outstanding career, Jacquie was inducted into the Buffalo Broadcasters' Hall of Fame in 2011. The Buffalo Excellence in Media Awards selected her as ‘Television Personality of the Year’ in 2012. Buffalo Business First has named Jacquie among the most influential people in WNY.

Jacquie truly believes in serving others through community volunteerism. Because of her dedication to the fight against cancer, she was honored with the prestigious Service to Mankind Award by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. She also has received major awards from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Kevin Guest House, Rotary Club, National Conference for Community and Justice, Girl Scouts of WNY, and other charitable & civic organizations. For the past 8 years, the Buffalo chapter of the American Association of University Women has presented a $5,000 scholarship in Jacquie’s honor to a local college student.

Jacquie’s work has been recognized with dozens of journalism awards, sixteen Emmy nominations, and the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Communications. She is proud to be on the News 4 team that earned two National Edward R. Murrow Awards for coverage of the tragic crash of Flight 3407 in 2009. In 2012, she anchored live coverage from Canada as Nik Wallenda completed his historic wire-walk over Niagara Falls.

Jacquie’s husband, Mike Beato, is a technology consultant. They are the proud parents of two young men: an administrator with the Stern School of Business, New York University, and an attorney with the Washington, D.C. law firm, Wiley Rein.
MARIA WHYTE is currently the Deputy County Executive (DCE) for Erie County, NY. She has served in this post since January 2015 and is the first female in a generation to hold the title. As DCE she advances the County’s most significant economic development projects, provides strategic operational support for the County’s 20+ departments, negotiates and communicates with the other levels of government, and generally serves as the County’s top problem solver.

From January 2012 to January 2015, Ms. Whyte served Erie County as the Commissioner for the Department of Environment and Planning (DEP). The Department has over 200 employees spread across four Divisions: Planning, Economic Development, Environmental Compliance, and Sewer Management. In her capacity as the Commissioner, Maria not only coordinated the activities of each of the Divisions, but also served as the founder and first Chairperson of the Buffalo and Erie County Land Bank. She also served on the Board of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Buffalo Place, and the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation—all important to the economic revitalization of the region.

Prior to becoming the DEP Commissioner, Maria served six years as the 6th District Erie County Legislator, representing Buffalo’s Westside, Black Rock, and Riverside. She served as the Democratic Majority Leader during her entire tenure on the Legislature and is the first and only freshman Legislator to ever be elected Majority Leader.

Maria has a strong sense of Erie County’s greatest assets—historic parkland, unique architecture, accredited universities, vibrant cultural organizations, and a treasured waterfront—and while serving Erie County she has fought hard to properly fund and preserve them all. She is well known for her campaign to facilitate better regional planning that would not only protect natural resources, preserve farmland, invest in 21st century infrastructure, and facilitate strategic economic development in the region, but would also save taxpayers millions of dollars. She has also been a strong advocate for quality youth programming and public funding of the arts.

Perhaps most illustrative of Maria’s incredible ability to organize people and motivate them to work cooperatively was the more than two years she spent working with the Powell Family and community stakeholders to bring Extreme Makeover Home Edition to Buffalo. Maria first nominated the Powell Family for consideration by ABC when she wrote an impassioned three-page letter to the producers in September 2007. She then conducted a preliminary interview with an ABC film crew in February 2008, the footage of which was used in the nationally televised edition of the show. Maria was on hand, hard hat and all, in November 2009 when the crew descended on Buffalo’s westside to announce the Powell’s had been selected.

Prior to becoming the 6th District Legislator, Maria served for five years as Executive Director of the Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ). As Director of this small non-profit she coordinated operations and fundraising, growing the annual budget by 300% during her tenure.

Maria has a B.A. in International Relations with Honors from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and is currently pursuing her MBA from Medaille College. She was named one of Buffalo’s “10 MOST POWERFUL WOMEN” by the Buffalo Spree magazine in 2006. Maria is originally from Kansas City but moved to Buffalo in October 1999 and currently lives with her husband and two young children on Buffalo’s West Side.

DR. LILLIAN SERECE WILLIAMS is Associate Professor in the University of Buffalo’s Transnational Studies Department and former chair of the Department of African American Studies. She received her doctorate degree from the University of Buffalo. A specialist in United States social and urban history, she has taught at several universities, including Howard University and the University at Albany. Her research focuses upon institutions, ethnicity, biography, women’s history, and public advocacy.

Dr. Williams authored the highly acclaimed monography Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York 1900-1940. She also completed the monograph A Bridge to the Future: The History of Diversity in Girl Scouting, during her consulting work with the Girl Scouts of the USA, and thereafter launched her current book project, Blacks in Green: African Americans and the Girl Scout Movement. Dr. Williams also worked as editor of the Records of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, 1896-1992 and the sixteen volume series Black Women in American History. She is an associate editor of the Encyclopedia of New York State and serves on the editorial review board of SUNY Press.

Dr. Williams has consulted on several national, state, and local historical projects—several of which resulted in exhibitions, conferences, or curriculum development. In addition, Dr. Williams has served civic organizations repeatedly as a consultant or expert witness in federal lawsuits. In addition, she has lent her expertise to such organizations as the NAAACP and served as a member of the Mayor’s technical advisory committee for the Twenty Year Comprehensive Plan for Washington DC. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, the Michigan Street Area Historic Commission and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Corporation.
DR. MATTHEW WITHIAM, MD, PhD, is an Associate Research Professor at the University of Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Withiam received a combined MD/PhD degrees from the University of Buffalo, and became a board certified OB/GYN. Dr. Withiam joined the Family Justice Center of Erie County, a domestic violence service provider, in 2012 as a board member. He currently is Vice President of the Board at the FJC. His main area of interest at the FJC is increasing awareness of domestic violence among health care providers, emphasizing that domestic violence is a major public health crisis.