



ONTARIO COUNTY
ATHENA

37th Annual Leadership Awards

November 18, 2022

**CELEBRATION & JOY | FIERCE ADVOCACY | GIVING BACK | COURAGEOUS ACTS
COLLABORATION | AUTHENTIC SELF | LEARNING**

CONGRATULATIONS

Tara Rago, 2022 Athena Award Nominee!

LNB would like to congratulate **Tara Rago** and all of the **2022 Athena Award nominees** on this prestigious honor. Their leadership, dedication to professional excellence and support of women in the workplace have and will continue to make a lasting impact on our community.

———— **BankwithLNB.com** ————



Tara Rago

VP, Branch Manager,
LNB Canandaigua



LNB Banking.
It's all about people.



Member
FDIC

PROUD SPONSOR OF THE ATHENA PROGRAM

Celebrating Achievements of Women in Our Community

This year's ATHENA program highlights women in our community who show ingenuity, integrity, and grit in the face of new challenges. With a long, proud history forged by women with these very qualities, Thompson Health salutes this year's nominees. We are grateful to be a part of the sharing of their unique and inspiring stories.

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO THOMPSON'S OWN



Diane Hayton, BSN, RN
2022 ATHENA Leadership Nominee

Thompson Health
Director of Nursing, Long Term Care

As a mother, volunteer, foster parent, and leader in long-term care, Diane has been integral in helping women reach their potential. With grace and strength, she holds others accountable, providing a framework of support to help them grow.



F.F. Thompson Hospital is an
ANCC Magnet designated hospital
for nursing excellence.



UR
MEDICINE

THOMPSON
HEALTH

ATHENA *Our History*

“What is honored in a culture will be cultivated there.”

With that Plato quote as a guiding principle, Martha Mayhood Mertz founded ATHENA International in 1982 in Lansing, Michigan, to honor women leaders and bring balance to leadership voices worldwide.

Her friend, Oldsmobile executive Lynn Myers, reached out to Oldsmobile retailers across the country, and the program ultimately became a highly acclaimed national and international program.

Among the first on board some 37 years ago was Randy Farnsworth, motivated by his wife Margaret, who collaborated with the Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Professional Women’s Club to become the first city in New York State and among the first in the nation to offer the ATHENA Leadership Award.

It was the decided lack of recognition of women’s achievements and deficit of women in top leadership positions that initially prompted Mertz and Myers to help rectify these inequities. Thus, a unique ATHENA Leadership Model, based on the Eight Principles of Enlightened Leadership, was created to more closely reflect the leadership attributes of women.

This program has far exceeded its goals and continues to inspire, uplift and motivate women to live authentically, learn constantly, build relationships, foster collaboration, act courageously, advocate fiercely, give back and celebrate.

This year’s nominees exemplify the ATHENA qualities of professional excellence, community leadership and support for women.

About the ATHENA sculpture

The ATHENA Award is a bronze sculpture hand-cast by designer Linda Ackley at her foundry, Third Millennium Fine Arts, in Tampa, Florida.

Each is a unique work of art.

The marble base represents the recipient’s solid foundation. The cut glass crystal symbolizes the many facets of character and light emanating from the recipient. The outstretched arms suggest both celebration of achievement and the nurturing side of leadership — reaching out to others.

To date, nearly 8,000 leaders have been recognized with the ATHENA Leadership award in more than 500 regions, representing 48 states and 11 countries, including the USA, Bermuda, UK, China, Canada, Greece, India, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Ghana and Mexico.

— Melody Burri

37th ANNUAL ATHENA Leadership Awards Presented by Ontario Chamber of Commerce

2022 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Mary Beer RN MPH
Alyssa Belasco
Diane Hayton
Michelle Pedzich
Pamela Rhodes
Kimberly Sandic
Tracey Dello Stritto
Suzanne B. Underhill

2022 ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Andrea Brown
Caroline Wenzel Chapman
Tara Rago



SPONSORS

Founding:

Randall Farnsworth Auto Group

ATHENA Summit: Sands Family Foundation

Reception: Fuller Funeral Home

Diamond:

Canandaigua National Bank & Trust • Constellation Brands
Five Star Bank • LeChase

Platinum:

Canandaigua Insurance Agency • Chrisantha Construction Corporation
Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP • Morrell Builders
UR Medicine Thompson Health

Gold:

F. G. Rayburn Mason Contractors • Lyons National Bank • The Friend Team
Reliant Credit Union • Wegmans Food, Pharmacy & Market Café
United Way of Greater Rochester & the Finger Lakes

Centerpiece: Rockcastle Florist

Women's Initiative on Leadership

AT FINGER LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE BECOMES WARRIOR SERIES

JENNIE ERDLER KRAMPEN – At Finger Lakes Community College in the Fall of 2013 there was an ever-growing need for more leadership development and opportunities for college students on and off campus. This could have been handled from many angles. What the higher education research was indicating and what industry leaders were finding out was when people gather, have an opportunity to share authentic life experiences, offer guidance, mentor, and have a safe space to be able question and develop, that is when the listening individuals are able to grasp an understanding of their full potential. At the November 2013 Athena Dinner, is when the student need and community of female business leaders sparked the collaboration for the first time.

The Women's Initiative on Leadership was generously supported first by a FLCC Board of Trustees grant, then grew into a partnership with the FLCC Student Life Department, the FLCC Student Corporation, Finger Lakes Community College, and Ontario County (formerly Canandaigua) Chamber of Commerce, ATHENA Program. *Leadership through the power of storytelling* is the spirit of this community partnership model that has been able to be enhanced and improved upon each year based on assessment and results. Speakers for the program are often made up of the ATHENA Award and Young Professional recipients and nominees. At the year six mark of the program over 580 women, men, transgender, and middle school/early high school students had participated in one form or another in the FLCC Women's Initiative on Leadership program.

That Fall of 2018, the team noticed that the program drew a large number of identifying male students. The program title of Women's Initiative on Leadership needed a rebranding, as it was no longer truly serving the entire student population. Additionally, we continued to gain feedback that more participants wanted to take part in the program, but the time and/or the date of the program hindered their participation. The idea of the in-person & online Warrior Series program was born. The rebranding was meant to make the program more approachable and inclusive for all students, while still retaining the same goal of building confidence and empowering future leaders. The partnership with the network of ATHENA nominees and recipients has been invaluable. Our incredible roster of speakers has volunteered their time to come in and share their stories with our students, oftentimes offering some very personal aspects of their journey. Our students are able to see powerful members of our local community modeling



vulnerability and are able to see the potential in themselves by hearing our speakers' journeys. Some are FLCC alumni, one went from bus driver to CEO, one struggled with their identity before learning how to advocate for herself and others, and on and on. Our weekly topics mirror quite a bit with the ATHENA leadership model, and our students have the opportunity to hear how those tenets have and continue to play a role in our speakers' lives, encouraging our students to live this model too. We spent the summer of 2019 building a 100% online Warrior Series program and reached out to a few of our ATHENA speakers and the response was overwhelming. Ahead of the 2020 Covid-19 global pandemic, we built a leadership program that was the first of its kind for the college or our community. With this idea we quickly pivoted to meet the needs of our students when they were struggling in isolation and personal mental health.

In honor of this 10th academic year anniversary of the program, we launched a new book to accompany the program. The book we will be using is *Radical Love: Learning to Love Yourself and Others* by Zachary Levi. The concepts are in and around how the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, and lead. It's the overarching hope that those who complete the program learn what Levi states in his book that, "Vulnerability is not weakness, and the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure we face every day are not optional. I'm not an expert, therapist, pastor, teacher, or monk. I am merely a person going through my own mental and emotional health journey, hoping that I can pass on some of the wisdom and tools that I'd been blessed enough to learn along the way. And I truly believe that if we can help heal the hearts and minds of everyone on earth, we will solve every other problem known to us in the process." Levi shares his emotional journey through a lifetime of crippling anxiety and depression, which led him to want to take his own life to finding joy, gratitude, forgiveness, and ultimate purpose all the while facing head on the scars of childhood trauma.

Since the inception of Women's Initiative on Leadership, and now the Warrior Series, a program that began 10 years ago, has yielded over 2,000+ women, men, transgender, and middle school/early high school students who in one form or another have taken part in person or in our fully online version and growing.

We have had Woman's Initiative on Leadership and Warrior Series graduates come to us after receiving local scholarships, including the Professional Women of the Finger Lakes (PWFL) Scholarship.

List of ATHENA and ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award nominees and recipients who have been guest speakers at FLCC in Jennie Erdle-Krampen's Warrior Series – formerly known as Woman's Initiative on Leadership.

1. Tracey Fuller, President, Heiser Logistics
2. Lauren Kolb, Senior Wealth Advisor, Tompkins Financial Advisors
3. Kari Buch, Associate Director of Community Impact, United Way
4. Lynne Erdle, Retired Superintendent, Canandaigua City Schools
5. Stephanie Kunes, President of National MS Society, Upstate NY
6. Karen Blazey, Former Executive Officer, Quantum Performance Group, Inc.
7. Linda Farchione-Hawks, Retired President and CEO, Thompson Health
8. Kay James, Retired City Manager, City of Canandaigua
9. Sharon Gullo, Retired Psychiatric Nurse, Canandaigua Lake Counseling
10. Dr. Barbra Risser, President Emeritus, Finger Lakes Community College
11. Randy, Margaret, and Alexandra Farnsworth- Owners, Randall Farnsworth Auto Group
12. Jessica Nava, Chief Growth Officer, The Moxie Exchange
13. Amy Pauley, Executive Director, Survivor Advocacy Center of Finger Lakes
14. Ginny Clark, Retired Executive Director, Sands Family Foundation
15. Deborah Wilbur, Retired Teacher, Canandaigua City Schools
16. Nadia Harvieux, Director of Educational Programs, Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges
17. Ann Scheetz, Executive Director, Ontario ARC New York
18. Emily Palumbos, CEO, ESP Consulting, LLC
19. Terrie Meyn, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Happiness House
20. Deborah Denome, Director of Seeking Common Ground
21. Tracy Janczak, Owner-Operator at Core Rhythm Pilates
22. Janet Tenreiro, Former Owner of the Medicine Shoppe
23. Valerie Knoblauch, President, Finger Lakes Visitors Connection

Giving Back

2022 ATHENA Leadership Award Recipient Dr. Hazel Robertshaw

LAUREL C. WEMETT – Robertshaw has been pinching herself every once in a while, after receiving the ATHENA award. “I was bowled over to be nominated,” she says, with a still discernible English accent. She was shocked to be in the company of the other nominated women and stresses that she works with incredible people. “I was just doing my job. Health care is a team sport. It’s about who you surround yourself with, your mentors, and the foundation you received from your parents.”

The ATHENA award allowed the administrator to reflect on her career, the choices she has made and what she still wants to achieve. “It made me stop and think what is important to me personally and professionally.”

Giving Back, one of the tenets of the ATHENA program, was chosen by Robertshaw to address:

“As a nurse everything I do is about serving my community,” Helping others has long been part of Robertshaw’s nature. Early on she gained confidence and learned responsibility as a Brownie Guide whose promise she can still recite: “I promise that I will do my best, to be true to myself and develop my beliefs, to serve the Queen and my community, to help other people and to keep the (Brownie) Guide Law.”

As a youngster she delivered meals to families in need with her “mum” and with her mother’s encouragement, overcame shyness by performing in musicals. As a teenager her ability to problem-solve surfaced when babysitting a fussy 18-month-old who wouldn’t fall asleep. After one sleepless night she dabbed on some Chanel No. 5 perfume, a scent worn by the infant’s absent mother and successfully soothing the infant’s fussiness.

Robertshaw studied nursing at English schools and universities ultimately earning a Ph.D. in nursing from the prestigious Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and Midwifery, King’s College, University of London. Over the years she worked in a variety of medical and surgical settings specializing in oncology nursing. She became Lead Cancer Nurse at Oxford University Hospitals – one of the world’s foremost cancer centers and linked to the world’s oldest university.

Robertshaw came to the U.S. in 2006 because she wanted to work in another country with a different model of healthcare.

While no longer a bedside nurse, Robertshaw enjoys going on rounds at Thompson, making bedside visits on a regular basis when her calendar allows. She is quick to point out that is typical of many of the hospital executives. She assisted in the Emergency Department during some of the worse COVID times, by helping to get samples to the lab, cleaning rooms, and assisting with patient flow.

The healthcare world was sorely tested during COVID according to Robertshaw. She describes the last three years as “intense.” Despite the challenges, however, she believes they will be the “most rewarding” years of her career.

“COVID was unknown; thankfully Canandaigua didn’t have what New York City had, but it was still hard.” While healthcare workers at Thompson did not lack Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), initially the fear was “palpable.” “Our first thought was not about personally contracting the disease, but rather, ‘Am I going to take something home?’” There was no working at home. Staffing was difficult. Every day she wore her scrubs to work. She acknowledges how COVID also exacerbated the challenge of the pre-existing nursing shortage. Some nurses retired, others left the health care field, and some chose not to get vaccinated. “The combination impacted us at all levels, including internationally.”

“It is my job to grow the next generation of nurses,” points out Robertshaw. During her career she has often been successful in creating opportunities for advancement of nurses through educational partnerships with local colleges and universities.

She is looking ahead -- currently exploring new ways of giving back to the next generation. A local group called Expeditions of Empowerment appeals

*“As a nurse
everything I do
is about serving my
community,”*

*“It is my job
to grow the next generation
of nurses,”*



*“COVID was unknown;
thankfully Canandaigua
didn’t have what
New York City had, but it
was still hard.”*

*“Our first thought was not
about personally contracting
the disease,
but rather, ‘Am I going to
take something home?’”*

to Robertshaw as it focuses on youngsters who may be at risk of dropping out of high school. It offers opportunities for them to test themselves through outdoor adventures where they learn they can do more than they thought they could. She believes that by mentoring these youngsters some would find satisfying careers in the health care field, especially, in nursing.

Robertshaw is grateful for her husband, Mike, her step children and five grandchildren who help her decompress from work. The couple is enjoying “Boris,” a new 5-month old Chesapeake retriever they welcomed into their home. Among the family photos on display in her office, his image peers out from the tablet on her desk offering the promise of a playful walk in nature.

ABOUT HAZEL

Vice President of Patient Care Service/Chief Nursing Officer, UR Thompson Health.

From her corner office on the second floor of the F.F. Thompson Hospital Professional Building, Dr. Hazel Robertshaw can see the comings and goings to the hospital’s Emergency Department’s entrance. “I know when we have someone who is significantly ill,” says Robertshaw whose view includes the ambulances and the Mercy Flight helicopter landing on its helipad. While the patients are foremost in her mind, the hospital administrator also enjoys a nearby tree visibly changing the color of its leaves.

Robertshaw, the 2021 ATHENA Leadership recipient, has been at UR Medicine, Thompson Health for 15 years serving as Vice President of Patient Care Service/Chief Nursing Officer. Her roots, however, are far from the community she now serves so capably. Robertshaw was born at her family’s home with help from a midwife and her dad in the city of Wakefield not far from the larger city of Leeds, west of Yorkshire in northern England.

“Healthcare permeates my family. It’s in my blood,” affirms Robertshaw who points out that her family has strong ties to the medical field. In her Thompson office, hanging on a clothes tree, is the crisply ironed blue and white nursing uniform dating from the late 1950s which belonged to Robertshaw’s mother, a district nurse in Chesterfield. Her father was also involved with healthcare as the Director of a hospital laboratory. Over generations Robertshaw says that her extended family has produced numerous doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and nurses.

2022 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Mary L. Beer, RN, MPH

CURRENT POSITION: Director of Public Health, Ontario County

EDUCATION HISTORY: Bachelor of Science Niagara University; Masters of Public Health Walden University; Honorary Doctorate Hobart William Smith Colleges

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband, James Beer; Mother, Letitia J. Welch; Deceased Father, William Welch; Sister, Judith Welch; Brother, William Welch, Jr.



Business or professional accomplishments:

“I have been in management/leadership roles for over 40 years. A Head Nurse on a Medical-Surgical floor at St. Mary’s Hospital, a Manager of Utilization Review/Quality Assurance for BC/BS, a Nurse Recruiter for Highland Hospital, an Product Manager for a claims editing software company, the Director of Eldersource a program of Lifespan and Director of Clinical Services for VNS. My most challenging and rewarding role has been Director of Public Health for Ontario County for the past 14 years. I am most proud that when I started there was one out of 20 staff with a masters degree...there are now five and one currently matriculated. This is just one way the team has been elevated to successfully function at the highest level.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“As Past President of Clifton Springs Rotary I wrote a grant providing the Phelps Community Center with state-of-the-art software enabling proper documentation of services/programming. I also led the Board in multiple projects which provided financial support for community programs such as the Senior Christmas Dinner and providing free schools supplies for students in financial need.”

“I have served as a hospice volunteer for over 20 years, first at Advent House and now at Serenity House. During the pandemic I was able to meet with the board to help define Covid processes.”

“As a Board Member of Victor Farmington Ambulance I was able to help coordinate free Covid testing at the site for residents.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“The management/leadership roles that I have held mainly involved working with women. Throughout the years I have been able to mentor many women to advance their career through education. One example is Kate Ott, RN. We discussed her career goals which was to be the Health Educator. I encouraged her to get an MPH degree in order to qualify. She obtained her degree and when the position opened she moved into the role. Several years later a promotional opportunity became available. She was very hesitant. I shared my vision for the team and the role she would play. She agreed and has grown to be a remarkable leader. In six years she has developed skills that has resulted in a cohesive and high performing team.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“To truly lead you must be true to yourself. The team can always spot a phony and will not embrace your vision if you are not your authentic self, every day, in every interaction. To lead a team of professionals requires vulnerability and courage. The end results of a high performing team is worth the risk. I am well aware that leadership is not a popularity contest. It is relational but when your team knows who you are they can then decide, for themselves, is this the leader I want to follow? My team knows that I am not perfect and that I don’t expect them to be either....but together we can accomplish great things.”



Alyssa Belasco

CURRENT POSITION: Executive Director, New York Kitchen

EDUCATION HISTORY: Bachelor of Science; Communication & Media Arts; SUNY Brockport

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband, William Kalish; Daughter, Willa Sue; Dogs, Ollie & Max

Business or professional accomplishments:

“I feel my top professional accomplishment was coming onboard and leading an organization throughout a pandemic. This was new territory for me with many unknowns, and a lot of trust to be established—and over time it was. We restructured the organization, got creative, worked tirelessly, and now we’re in one of the strongest positions we’ve ever been as a nonprofit, gearing up for growth! Receiving regular kudos from our board of directors is icing on the accomplishment cake.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“My involvement as a founding member of the 100 Women Who Care Rochester NY chapter has been one of my most meaningful community service roles. In late 2019, I gathered with a group of like-minded women, we were on a mission to create an accessible giving circle to elevate our community. Our first membership meeting was March 2020—then the world shut down. We persisted throughout the pandemic, now on a virtual level. What’s meaningful to me is the obvious, providing unrestricted grants to nonprofits on a quarterly basis. The less obvious, learning that our giving circle was a woman’s introduction to philanthropy, and how they’ve continued to give back regularly, outside of our quarterly meetings. This December, we will celebrate having given away over \$125,000.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“I am fortunate to be part of an all-female leadership team at New York Kitchen, who appreciate the importance of lifelong learning. Strategic professional development is a priority for me, and I believe in allocating time and dollars to support team members in areas they want to grow. This looks like attending a women’s leadership conference as a team and discussing topics like imposter syndrome; supporting a female employee throughout a rigorous six-month certification course and exam (she passed!); providing uninterrupted time for a leader who wants structured education around successful supervision; and delegating time to also be the student.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“While all eight principals really resonate, I choose giving back. Last year, my husband and I experienced the unfathomable, pregnancy loss and stillbirth of our daughter, Willa. Through my grief, I decided to honor our sweet girl with “Willa Wishes”—small acts of kindness in her name. Beneficiaries have included organizations like Star Legacy Foundation, donating copies of The Invisible String to local hospitals for families experiencing loss. For the one year of Willa’s Day, I chose to raise funds for URMC’s Bereavement Box program, to ensure that there is never a day when loss parents don’t receive a memory box of their own like I did, because it’s all I have and means the world to me. Our collective generosity raised over \$6,000 in less than three weeks.”

2022 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Diane Hayton, RN, BSN



CURRENT POSITION: Director of Nursing, Healthcare, MM Ewing Continuing Care Center

EDUCATION HISTORY: 2018 Bachelors of Nursing Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY. 1984 Associates of Nursing Community College of the Finger Lakes, Canandaigua, NY.

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Daughter, Hope Breen; Son, Gerald Breen IV; Parents, The Late Robert and Carol Hayton; Sisters, Bonnie Arena, Janet McBride, Jennifer Williamson; Brothers, Robert and Donald Hayton

Business or professional accomplishments:

“My greatest accomplishment has been keeping our residents and staff safe during the pandemic. When other facilities were experiencing significant loss of life, our CCC did not, thanks to steadfast leadership and commitment to a safe work and home environment. Through all of this, my team has achieved and maintained a 5-star CMS rating, the highest rating provided to nursing homes.

“In addition, throughout my career, I have worked to create environments for the elderly and disabled adults to flourish through skilled staff, kindness, creativity and appreciation for their contributions to society and the places they hold in their family’s hearts.”

“I continue to encourage other women to reach their goals, assisting with the development of Thompson’s certified nursing assistant (CNA) training program and the CNA-to-LPN advancement program.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“Growing up in a multigenerational household helped me appreciate the elderly and the sacrifices they have made. This has molded my career.

“I was a certified foster parent, taking in children for respite. I had the opportunity to help a young woman who was aging out of foster care. After residing in a detention center for many years, this placement allowed her the opportunity to have positive interactions and change her path before leaving foster care.”

“I have served in multiple volunteer roles through my church, my children’s schools, and Scouts. I have participated in multiple walks raising money for breast cancer and Alzheimer’s research.”

“I try to provide the message that having a service heart benefits all and can be accomplished with whatever time one has available.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“Throughout my career as a nurse, I advocate for the nursing profession with the women I encounter and urge those with potential to pursue the career. One young woman working with residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities exhibited these qualities. After sharing the confidence I had in her ability, she decided to go to nursing school. Years later she thanked me, stating she had become a registered nurse. It was my vision for her that gave her the needed confidence to go to school for nursing.”

“I currently mentor two nurses interested in developing their management skills. We meet weekly to work through scenarios and develop plans to manage them. I offer opportunities for growth in management as they become available. Together we develop and update policies for the CCC.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“In 1982, as a senior in high school, I received the first \$500 scholarship given by the Thomson Health Guild. This scholarship changed my life. Growing up on a farm in Hemlock with five siblings, a college education was a luxury we couldn’t afford. This allowed me the opportunity to go to school to become a nurse.”

“Over the past 38 years I have provided nursing care to thousands of individuals in the Finger Lakes. This propels my desire to assist other women to achieve their goals through our CNA-to-LPN program, a scholarship program where CNAs can go to school, working part time and receiving full-time wages. I have also participated in the development of the CNA program for our CCC, training individuals in the skills needed to become CNAs.”



Michelle Pedzich

CURRENT POSITION: Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, Canandaigua National Bank & Trust Company

EDUCATION HISTORY: Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, SUNY Geneseo, 1994; Master of Science in Human Resource Development, Rochester Institute of Technology, 2004

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband Keith Pedzich; Daughter, Sophie Pedzich

Business or professional accomplishments:

“I am proud of leading our employee development efforts, including creating our “Thrive” internal leadership program that is in its fourth year. Over 70 employees have participated in the program, many of them moving on to senior level positions. This program takes emerging leaders from all areas of the bank and immerses them in emotional intelligence topics, such as inclusive leadership, curiosity, and radical candor. In addition, I created our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which has over 50 employees focusing on the areas of education, internal communications, community connections, and talent management, to ensure we have an environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging. I have also been on point during pandemic coordinating and leading our response efforts, educating and providing resources for our employees.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“It was a privilege to lead the Leadership Ontario Steering Committee in the development and successful launch of Leadership Ontario, which is now in its second year. The year-long program helps develop community-focused leaders. In addition, it was a pleasure to serve on the Canandaigua City School District Board of Education for ten years. Much was accomplished over that time, including developing a new strategic plan, assisting with the onboarding of new school leadership, and launching two capital projects. Finally, as the first Chair of the Ontario County Chamber of Commerce, it has been an honor to help lead the efforts in rebranding our organization and expanding our reach county-wide to meet the needs of our communities.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“In 2021, I led the launch of our first formal mentoring program at CNB, with women making up 60% of the participants. I also have formally mentored female Human Resources professionals through the National Human Resource Association’s mentoring program. To date, I still have active relationships with all four of the women I mentored, who have advanced to other career opportunities and now serving their own communities through volunteerism efforts. Informally, I have strived to build connections with others, particularly women, who are trying to balance work and personal lives. These relationships have also made me stronger as a leader and helps me focus on ensuring that I keep a servant leadership mindset.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“Of all the ATHENA principles, the core tenets of Building Relationships and Collaboration resonate with me the most and are linked together tightly for me. I strive to build relationships through authentic communications, active listening, and collaboration both professionally and personally. I believe I am a better employee, family member, and community member through reaching out to others to seek counsel and provide mutual support and encouragement. I also believe that when leaders build personal connections with others to understand their personal story and journey, it builds trust and makes it easier to celebrate success, hold tough conversations when needed, and appreciate and respect the differing viewpoints we each hold.”

2022 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Pamela Rhodes



CURRENT POSITION: Corps Officer/Pastor/Administrator, The Salvation Army-Canandaigua

EDUCATION HISTORY: Associates Degree in Occupational Studies, The Salvation Army College For Officers Training, Bachelors of Social Work, Asbury University

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband, Dave; Daughter, Maci

Business or professional accomplishments:

“My number one professional accomplishment, by far, was completing college. My early life was a struggle and I turned to alcohol to cope with the trauma. Enter my senior year of high school; my guidance counselor invited me to his office to talk to about my future. When I told him I wanted to go to college he all but laughed at me and proceeded to tell me that I would never make it in college or life, and I would never amount to anything. What did I do with that information? I kicked through every single obstacle in my way, including getting clean and sober, graduated from college with a degree in Social Work and promptly photo copied my diploma and mailed it to my High School Guidance Counselor.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“Being on the county’s Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Community Outreach and Education Taskforce has been invaluable to me. The taskforce is involved in reaching out to youth involved in exploitation and trafficking while providing awareness to agencies, programs, and communities with educational material and trainings around sex exploitation and human trafficking. I work every single day with people in this community who are seemingly invisible. It’s my privilege to advocate by connecting them to community services and resources. Other service opportunities like the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaboration, United Way initiatives, Kiwanis club, Workforce Development and of course our own Phoenix After School and Summer Day Camp are places you can find me! I am both an advocate and a fierce protector for those who have no voice.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“My life experience allows me to support women in many different capacities. I enjoy being a mentor and pouring my personal experience and knowledge into other women’s lives. Having the opportunity to mentor women through the Finger Lakes Community College Social Work department as a field placement site supervisor gives me the opportunity to grow our next generation of professionals. With 20+ years in the Salvation Army, I also support our up and coming younger Salvation Army women pastors. Mentoring is all about how we can build each other up and spur one another on. The Bible says “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” I want all of us women to be as sharp as a tack in both our personal and business lives.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“I happen to own a t shirt that says ‘Hope Dealer’. So when asked to pick one of the Eight Principles of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with me, I knew the exact one: Celebration & Joy! I live my life with a healthy combination of joy, hope, celebration, and purpose. It is how I am wired. Each day I try to spread that around to women and others I meet. We live in a world that doesn’t show much joy or celebration and so sometimes that means I come off as an oddball, but that is ok with me! I know that I have been set apart to bring glory to God, and for me, that means throwing around hope, joy and celebration like confetti!”



Kimberly Sandic

CURRENT POSITION: Program Manager, National Sales Operations, Marsh McLennan Agency

EDUCATION HISTORY: Finger Lakes Community College

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Daughter, Elana Sandic; Life partner, James Jones; Bonus Daughter, Carley; Son, CJ Jones

Business or professional accomplishments:

“Several years ago, my former manager and mentor asked me to partner with her in pitching a presentation building tool that sat within in a sales enablement platform to our new female Chief Operating Officer. After much research and due diligence we headed to Manhattan, sat across from each other and I put what I felt was my career on the table. We tested and launched the platform, however, seven months into the project we realized it was not going to meet our needs. Even though the platform did not fully support the scope of our project as expected, it provided a repository for another group’s project. This allowed them to meet their objectives and get them closer to their timeline.”

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

“I grew up in Kiwanis and became an official member when my father unexpectedly passed away 3 years ago. I have chaired/co-chaired many committees, am a board member, Vice President 2020-2021, President Elect 2021-2022 and awarded Kiwanian of the Year, and will be President 2023-2024.”

“The pandemic forced us to be creative and pivot in how we delivered our annual events so I suggested we go virtual with our kid’s carnival. Our social media guru and I built an interactive webpage that provided a ton of fun challenges for kids and families to do together. This allowed them a safe space and kept us connected. We offered prizes for their submissions and had several hits to our site from other countries.”

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

“MMA, as a \$2B company, just recently established a Regional Sales Operations (RSO) group, which consists of 75% women. The role of the RSOs is to help create consistency in how we build and deploy sales initiatives, tools and resources across our entire firm. This past summer, I partnered with my manager to create a vision for how the RSO group will expand over time to serve the needs of the organization. This will create tremendous opportunities for all team members, but especially several women, to rise and work on stretch projects. The stretch projects and opportunities will support their personal and professional growth and I’m proud to be part of contributing to help others advance.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“As an only child, relationships were always important to me. I thrived on meeting new people, hearing their stories, and what made them tick. Growing up I intently watched my parents navigate their day whether it was helping a frustrated student, de-escalating an unhappy client or talking with the checkout clerk at the grocery store. They both had the knack to connect on a level that made the other person feel valued and heard. I believe relationships are the foundation for any success. Without relationships and collaboration we would not have employees, suppliers, customers, or family. Striving to make those types of connections and gain the trust of others has helped me grow as a mother, partner, colleague, leader, and member of Kiwanis.”

2022 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Tracey Dello Stritto



CURRENT POSITION: Executive Director, The Partnership for Ontario County

EDUCATION HISTORY: Bachelors of Science in Counseling

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband, Doug Dello Stritto, Sons, Anderson (7) and William (4)

Business or professional accomplishments:

Working in the non-profit sector offers many rewarding and challenging experiences. Funding, capacity building and sustainability are ever present challenges. The pandemic highlighted the critical need for services provided by the Partnership for Ontario County. Through the support of the Partnership Board of Directors and a team of dedicated employees and volunteers, we have steadily grown programs that address the increased needs brought on by the pandemic. Mental health support centers, safe spaces for youth and food security all impact the immediate needs of our community. Throughout the growth of these programs, I was also able to ensure the continuity of the organization into the future through expanded partnerships and Board supported fundraising efforts.

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

A lasting impact of the pandemic has been the broadening of the definition of health and well-being. Gratefully, the definition now includes mental health. The Partnership's addition of two mental health centers which provide free counseling to anyone in the community eliminates barriers such as transportation and cost. Throughout the pandemic we were able to provide counseling support to over 150 people. Additionally, our collaboration with Foodlink for our monthly drive-thru food distributions in Canandaigua which are staffed by dedicated volunteers have served over 2,500 people in just a few short months. I am proud to be a part of these life-sustaining programs that have made a difference to those in crisis.

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

The Partnership for Ontario County supports programs that are managed by a diverse group of women. These women are empowered to make decisions to address the needs of the people they serve. I am honored to provide support to these incredible women on a daily basis through collaboration, listening and workforce development – even if that means they outgrow the organization. Investing in their professional development is vital to their advancement as women in their fields.

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

Growing up, my parents were foster parents. At an early age I saw how important it was to advocate for those who had no voice. Whether advocating for continued breast cancer research funding or food and mental health supports, it is crucial to fulfill these basic needs. These needs are only met when advocates stand up and help those who are at their most vulnerable as these life-saving services are not always available to the most vulnerable members of our community. I am proud to lead a team of advocates who are dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the Partnership to advance positive social change in our community.



Suzanne Barnum Underhill

CURRENT POSITION: RN, Executive Director, Light Hill/ Canandaigua Comfort Care Home, Inc.

EDUCATION HISTORY: Attended Canandaigua School System, 1991 Graduate of FLCC RN, Nursing Program, Attended Nazareth, REIKI certification, End of Life Nursing Education Consortium Trainer. National Center for Death Education Thanatology workshop certification.

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband - Steve, Daughter - Delacey, Sisters - Bonnie, Gayle and Duannah.

Business or professional accomplishments:

Since the first meeting held in 2012, I have helped bring awareness of two bed end-of-life care homes to the Canandaigua Community. I provided oversight for the remodeling/renovation of Light Hill before stepping into my current role as nurse and Executive Director—a lifelong dream.

My 36-year career at the Canandaigua VAMC was varied. I began in 1978 as a psychiatric nursing assistant, then went back to college while working full time to earn my Registered Nursing License. I worked in acute medicine as charge nurse on the afternoon shift and then oversaw the running of the hospital as the Midnight Nursing Supervisor. I retired from my final position of Advanced Illness Care Coordinator to step into my role as Executive Director at Light Hill.

Meaningful leadership roles and accomplishments in community service:

As an end-of-life care resource, I share my knowledge and experience throughout the community. I have been involved in educating hospice agencies regarding Veterans seeking care; helping to create and promote the “We Honor Veteran’s Program” available to all U.S. hospice agencies today; leading community bereavement support groups at Sands Cancer Center; serving on the Ethics Committees at the VAMC and FFTH; leading dementia caregiver support groups, and addressing nursing classes at FLCC. Educating others regarding their supportive role for the terminally ill benefits future patients and families. A common fear of caregivers is medicating. I dispel this fear by promoting greater understanding of symptom management. Relieving pain, anxiety and discomfort allows a greater chance of a peaceful transition to a good death.

Supporting the advancement and leadership of other women:

When I retired from the VAMC, a Palliative physician told me that watching me pursue and work toward my dream gave her the strength to act on her desire to resign and start her own Psychiatric practice. She continues to have a successful practice. My willingness to listen and provide insight helped her realize her goals and gave her the confidence to act on them.

Role-modeling and mentoring caregivers is a natural part of my life. I share my varied experiences as a nurse with women who want to pursue medical careers, giving encouragement and helping them build the confidence to achieve their goals. At Light Hill, I mentor volunteers and staff, to help them achieve their full potential and strive toward becoming the person they are meant to be.

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

Living an authentic life and always doing my best are two of my core values. I have always felt great empathy for those experiencing the end stages of life. Growing up on our farm, I learned that death was a natural part of life. Sensing when an animal was dying, I would often be present until its death. Throughout my nursing career, I have honed my calming, compassionate, approach for those living their final life’s chapter. Connecting with others, being present in the moment, recognizing opportunities, finding joy in life, understanding another’s situation and promoting goodness, health and wellbeing, guide me. I help people understand hope is always present, but the focus of hope needs to change and be fluid as our lives change and unfold as they should.

Living Authentically

2021 ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award Recipient

Mandy Friend Gigliotti

“The fact the ATHENA Young Professional Award incorporates so much about who the person is, rather than what they’ve accomplished, is why this award was such an honor to receive.”

LAUREL C. WEMETT – Mandy Friend Gigliotti’s first job was as a Gate Keeper at Onanda Park during the summer at the town park on Canandaigua Lake. “I loved being outside,” she remembers with an infectious smile. Her second job as a teenager was coaching younger kids to play lacrosse. She excelled at the sport and after graduating from Canandaigua Academy in 2005, she headed off to the University of Richmond in Virginia with a full lacrosse scholarship. Ultimately, her exceptional athletic ability in the sport led her to play in the World Cup of Lacrosse in 2009 and again in 2013. Not surprisingly, when it came to choosing a career, a desk job was not for Friend Gigliotti, the recipient of the ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award in 2021. Armed with a minor in Business Administration from the Virginia university, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the encouragement of friends and families, she turned to real estate in 2010, not an easy choice as the market was recovering from the housing crash of 2008. When she started as a solo agent she was one of the younger realtors; the average age for a realtor then was 56. Friend Gigliotti’s youth meant she moved quickly and was at ease with the changing technology.

After only three years she founded the Friend Team and joined the Keller Williams Realty, a brokerage with offices in Brighton, Greece, and Canandaigua. She built the team on the foundation of investing in meaningful relationships and innovative systems. Today there are 10 agent members on the Friend Team and it has become one of the top 10 in the Rochester area.

“I love working on a team,” says the 34-year old. Every client, whether buyer or seller receives service from each team member. The Friend Team celebrates achievements together, and with the challenges of 2020, the team was emotionally beneficial, explains Friend Gigliotti. The team attracts agents with its objective to maintain a balanced work-home life.

Today, she is Team Founder, The Friend Team at Keller Williams Realty. Partner/owner with husband Ed Gigliotti of Upper Cervical Chiropractic of Rochester, and Full Heart Child Care

ATHENA Young Professional Award

“The fact the ATHENA Young Professional Award incorporates so much about who the person is, rather than what they’ve accomplished, is why this award was such an honor to receive,” says the 2021 recipient.

Growing up on the edge of Bristol with two sisters Friend Gigliotti recalls, “There was a lot of energy and competition; we always had someone to play catch with. Our parents let us be kids and I try to do the same.” Today, relying on her faith is critical whenever the Bushnell’s Basin resident makes decisions regarding her family, business or parenting. Her husband, Ed Gigliotti supports her life choices. She is partner in his business, Upper Cervical Chiropractic of Rochester, and together the couple opened Full Heart Child Care in 2017, a day care center in Rochester now serving over 100 families.

“There are many facets to living authentically,”



“The more I spent time reflecting on my life -- what I felt called to do and what brought me joy, the more I was able to go down a path that, while not necessarily the easiest, was the one that brought me more joy and fulfillment than I could have imagined.”

Living Authentically, one of the tenets of the ATHENA program, was chosen by Friend Gigliotti to address.

Friend Gigliotti points to Brene Brown, a bestselling author, who shares that living authentically is making the choice to let our true selves, be seen.

The threat today believes Friend Gigliotti is “comparison culture” – meaning looking at social media and wanting to be like everyone else. “Even though the use of social media helped me grow all of our businesses it creates a significant threat to living authentically. We find ourselves spending time analyzing and making assumptions of other people’s lives, often in a way that makes us believe their lives are happier, more successful and with more peace than ours.”

“As a result,” she continues “we start to change the way we live and the way we think in order to conform and to keep up with these imagined lives; we end up losing ourselves in the process. This is exactly what happened to me as I grew my business. I was trying to be everything for everyone and faced the stark realization I could no longer articulate what actually brought me joy.”

With her desire to find herself again, she started her journey to pursue living authentically:

The opening of a daycare in spite of lacking a background in childhood education, homeschooling her children, and choosing to become a foster family are three examples of the choices Friend Gigliotti made to pursue life authentically. “The more I spent time reflecting on my life -- what I felt called to do and what brought me joy, the more I was able to go down a path that, while not necessarily the easiest, was the one that brought me more joy and fulfillment than I could have imagined.”

“There are many facets to living authentically,” says the young professional. “The best way is to know yourself and what your goals are. When you are in survival mode, you can’t give.” She believes everyone has a unique calling and personally looks forward to each season as she continues to uncover what that is for her, even if it is not the status quo, ‘inside the box’ or expected.

“My desire in sharing is the hope to encourage others to pursue living authentically so that our community and this world can experience and receive the gift of every single one of us.” She shares her thoughts since 2019 through Pursue You, a digital podcast described as “a deep dive into strategies, tools and powerful questions that will set you on your own personal journey to pursue you.” She is also a respected speaker, facilitator and trainer both locally and across the country.

With her full life, how does she deal with everyday stresses? “I don’t drink coffee,” beams the energetic young woman. Upon reflection she adds it depends on the source of the fatigue. If she is exhausted from child-rearing, she chooses sleep. If she is “doing too much,” she goes for a run and exercises.

2022 ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Andrea Brown

CURRENT POSITION: Assistant Director of Student Life, Finger Lakes Community College
EDUCATION HISTORY: A.S. in Humanities and Social Science, Corning Community College; B.A. in Sociology and M.S. in Student Affairs Administration, Binghamton University
Bachelor of Science, Nursing (BSN) at St. John Fisher College
IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband Matt Brown and daughter Ella Brown, parents Gregory and Kathi Cronkrite



Describe your top business and/or professional accomplishments:

“The Women’s Initiative on Leadership program (now the Warrior Series) started the semester before I began at FLCC in 2014, but since then I have partnered with my Director to revamp the curriculum and create a fully online version of the program – which we started creating in the summer of 2019 and launched in January 2020 – unknowingly perfect timing, so we never missed a semester of providing this program for students. Also in 2020, I played a significant role in pivoting all of our Student Life programming and services to be virtual due to the pandemic. I worked creatively to keep students engaged virtually for a full year while working remote, which was previously unheard of in my field, and while learning to raise a newborn as a first-time mom.”

What are your most meaningful leadership roles in community service and the results that were accomplished.

“At FLCC, I have had the opportunity to take students on multiple Collegiate Challenge trips through Habitat for Humanity International to other affiliates on the east coast, allowing students to visit places outside of the area and gain a deeper awareness of the need for decent and affordable housing. When I had the opportunity to join the Board of Directors for our own Habitat for Humanity of Ontario County, I was eager to become more involved in the great work that Habitat does. In my second year on the Board, I stepped into the role of Treasurer. Having come from a lower socioeconomic background, it means a lot to play even a small role in giving a hand up to a family in need.”

Provide a specific example of how you have demonstrated support for the advancement and leadership of women in your profession:

“I have helped develop the curriculum for and co-lead the Warrior Series (formerly the Women’s Initiative on Leadership) leadership development program at FLCC. Seeing the impact this program has had on the students who have completed it – students coming more out of their shell, running for leadership positions, having the confidence to pursue transferring to a dream school, and more – it has been a privilege to help pave the path for the growth those students have had.

In my career to-date, I have regularly served as a mentor to graduate-level and part-time professional staff seeking to advance in the field of student affairs. I especially enjoy working with newer professionals, to help kindle the joy of changing lives through education and co-curricular experiences.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“As an educator, Learning is a core principle of mine and Learner is even one of my top five Clifton Strengths, but the principle that actually resonates the most with me is Authentic Self. My job is to help students discover their passions, strengths, and to find and live their authentic self. One of the primary goals of the Warrior Series is to guide that self-discovery. Becoming a mom has only reinforced the importance for me of living authentically myself, since I want to make sure my daughter is never afraid to be herself. Being your authentic self is a choice, and in some ways it can be a risk, but I believe it is one that we can’t afford to not take.”



Caroline Wenzel Chapman

CURRENT POSITION: Director of Communications & Advisement, Canandaigua City School District
EDUCATION HISTORY: Geneva High School, 2001; William Smith College, 2005 – BA; St. John Fisher College, 2010 – Masters of Science in International Studies; University of Rochester, 2014 – School Building Leader & School District Leader Certifications; University of South Carolina – Currently pursuing my Ed. D. degree in School Improvement Science
IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband- Ryan; Son – Drew, 7; Daughter – Kate, 5

Describe your top business and/or professional accomplishments:

“For the past eighteen years, I have been employed at the Canandaigua City School District. In my tenure I have worked in a variety of positions within the district. Initially I taught secondary social studies and then moved to technology integrator, and am currently the Director of Communications and Advisement while also serving as the Interim Assistant Director of Athletics. One of my proudest achievements occurred during the COVID pandemic. During this time the district needed to improve communication. I led the implementation of our virtual communication system, Parent Square and I continue to support our families and staff with the application. However, even more important are the relationships I have been fortunate enough to forge over the course of my career.”

What are your most meaningful leadership roles in community service and the results that were accomplished.

“As a student-athlete at William Smith College, I served as the President of both the William Smith and Liberty League Student Athlete Advisory Councils. Since graduating, I have been a member of the Heron Society Board of Directors, which provides mentorship and philanthropic support to the female athletes of the William Smith. While serving on the Board, I have been President and Secretary and we have worked with Hobart and William Smith Colleges to expand the sport offerings to female athletes, including the addition of ice hockey, volleyball, and bowling. We have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support athletes and coaches. The Board of Directors is focused on equity for women, especially as we celebrate fifty years since the passage of Title IX.”

Provide a specific example of how you have demonstrated support for the advancement and leadership of women in your profession:

“Throughout my life, I have had amazing female mentors - my fourth-grade teacher, Margaret Francis, my college soccer coach, Aliceann Wilber, and my mother, Ann Wenzel, to name just a few. I have used my life experiences and the lessons from these women as I have mentored young women during my time as a teacher, coach, and student council advisor. My current administrative position gives me the opportunity to collaborate with our teachers and coaches to develop opportunities for themselves and our students to be leaders in our school and beyond. Additionally, I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation which is focused on the retention of female coaches in scholastic athletics and my goal is to develop specific guidelines to support women coaches.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“The ATHENA Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with me most is building relationships. As we emerge from the pandemic, I realize that online meetings and working from home are not my strength. I need to be in the room with the action and make face to face connections with people. Many of those connections happen at unstructured times as you have the opportunity to listen, share, and laugh together. By getting to know someone and their perspective and background, trust and strong relationships are built which lead to the overall success for the individual and ultimately the group. I have been lucky enough to these relationships right here at home as I have been a lifelong resident of Ontario County.”

2022 ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

Tara Rago



CURRENT POSITION: Vice President & Branch Manager, Lyons National Bank Canandaigua Branch

EDUCATION HISTORY: Midlakes High School, Finger Lakes School of Massage Therapy (Licensed Massage Therapist, Licensed NY Cosmetologist)

IMMEDIATE FAMILY: Husband Michael Rago; Son, Chase; and Daughter, Hannah

Describe your top business and/or professional accomplishments:

“The most significant accomplishment of my career has been earning the title of Vice President at Lyons National Bank. Over the last 16 years, I have climbed the banking & finance ladder from teller all the way up to Branch Manager and VP at LNB. Banking and finance are a male-dominated industry, and it has taken a lot of hard work and sacrifice to achieve such a significant title as a working mother of two and active volunteer in my community.”

What are your most meaningful leadership roles in community service and the results that were accomplished.

“Community service and giving back to my community are a huge and meaningful part of my life.

I’ve dedicated countless hours as a board member for many impactful organizations and serve on subcommittees for events, fundraising, and other initiatives on these boards.

My favorite initiative has been the Lakefront Chair Project in Geneva, on the beautiful walkway of Seneca Lake between the Finger Lakes Welcome Center and 41 Lakefront Hotel (formerly known as the Ramada). After visiting a nearby lakefront that offered Adirondack chairs to the public while vacationing with family, I knew I needed to bring the same idea to Geneva. Chairs were purchased by individuals as a tribute to their family name or to lost loved ones, with part of the proceeds going to Geneva community organizations.

I also led the Backpack Program in the Geneva community to ensure no child goes without food, and to assist their mothers and families in fighting childhood hunger.”

Provide a specific example of how you have demonstrated support for the advancement and leadership of women in your profession:

“I am regularly sought out and embrace my calling as a mentor and confidant to female professionals across the Finger Lakes region. I make it a priority to lift and embrace women who are struggling to break through in male-dominated fields, and assist them with their career development by teaching them how to advocate for higher pay and promotions, how to network effectively, and by connecting them to community boards to see where their passions can benefit others. I do my best to not only assist women in their professional lives, but to help them build confidence in their personal lives as well by helping them realize their worth and become vital to organizations outside the workplace that are important to them.”

Principle of Enlightened Leadership that resonates with you the most and explain why:

“Giving back, serving the community, and lifting the global village at large come to mind when I think of this year’s ATHENA Leadership Award theme. Assisting women in our community has brought me immense joy and allowed me to leave my comfort zone as I advocate for the career success of other women. Mentoring women in the banking and finance industry has allowed me to grow as a person and become the mother and working mom I am today. Giving back to our community is important to me and my family, and I strive to raise my children with a philanthropic spirit and gratefulness and kindness in their hearts. My goal is to teach them to celebrate the good times and the bad, connect and learn through fostering relationships in their communities, and to be an unstoppable force for the greater good.”

NEW YORK KITCHEN

CONGRATULATIONS
ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINEES
ON HAVING ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS!

IN-PERSON + VIRTUAL CLASSES
TASTING ROOM
RESTAURANT

800 S. MAIN STREET,
CANANDAIGUA NY
NYKITCHEN.COM

CONGRATULATIONS
to All ATHENA Award Nominees & Recipients

Lake Country Physical Therapy
& Sports, PC

Established 1987
Zoe Fackelman, PT, RYT, CRMT

Zoe-nergy
Private and small group YOGA sessions
241 Parrish Street, Canandaigua
585-396-1400
LAKECOUNTRYPT.COM

ADAPTIVE THERAPEUTIC AND RESTORATIVE YOGA • SAFE FOR THE SPINE

CONTINENCE CARE • TMJ • ORTHOPEDICS • SPINE • PELVIC PAIN • SPORTS

Reach for the stars

Professional Women of the Finger Lakes Scholarship Recipient

Nicole Martin

*“Never give up -- no matter where life takes you and how hard life might be.
Reach for the stars. You can achieve anything you put your mind to.
It is possible to reach the dreams you have.”*

LAUREL C. WEMETT – “Commercial insurance keeps you on your toes,” says Nicole Martin who is employed at the Chrisman Insurance Agency in Honeoye. After many years working as a personal lines’ agent, a scholarship from the Professional Women of the Finger Lakes (PWFL) in 2021 allowed her to further her studies and become a licensed commercial lines agent and broker. It was worth the effort she says because the change presents her with more challenges.

“Taking the initiative and going for the scholarship after being out of school since 2010 was hard with so many other things to juggle,” says Martin on the PWFL Facebook page.

“This accomplishment helped me to excel in my career and it also shows my children that nothing is out of reach when you try,” stresses Martin. She became a commercial agent and was approved for a home mortgage. “My family now has our own home and a brighter, more secure future.”

Reach for the dreams you have

There is still plenty to juggle in Martin’s life with a 14-year-old and 11-year-old. In Livonia where the family lives she is coaching football seven to eight hours a week with 5th and 6th graders. Games are on the weekends from the end of August to the end of October. “I enjoy coaching – it gives me a rewarding experience watching the boys grow in a sport they love. It’s definitely challenging at times, but I always love a good challenge.”

The busy mother also finds time to volunteer at the Sent by Ravens Food Pantry in Livonia.

What would Martin tell other single mothers? “Never give up -- no matter where life takes you and how hard life might be. Reach for the stars. You can achieve anything you put your mind to. It is possible to reach the dreams you have.”

The PWFL ATHENA Scholarship is awarded to a female, over age 25, residing in Ontario County who is pursuing further education after a break of one or more years. Further education is defined as either college coursework or other accredited educational work toward a degree or certification.

The PWFL Scholarship is awarded to a female high school graduating student residing in Ontario County who has been accepted at a College or Institute of higher learning or other accredited education program.

Nicole Martin was the adult recipient in 2021. There were an estimated 10 scholarships given out at \$1200 apiece. The moneys come from donations, raffle basket donations at the ATHENA dinner and fundraising.

Learn more and find applications at the Professional Women of the Finger Lakes Facebook page and website. Applications are also sent to the counseling offices at schools for them to hand out.



“The best advice I was ever given by one of my colleagues was ‘Teach everyone.’ Most insured that you come across have no clue what coverage they are buying. So, teach them what they don’t know.”

ABOUT NICOLE

A graduate of Honeoye Central school Nicole enjoyed growing up in the small town of Honeoye which provided a taste of farm life. “My grandparents lived next door and had farm animals,” explains Martin who enjoyed the cows, pigs and chickens. She was also active in 4-H, participating in community service activities like making dog biscuits for the local animal shelter and cookies with chocolate in a cup for the Veterans and the Canandaigua Veterans Hospital around Christmas. Her confidence, life skills, leadership and teamwork were developed as a 4-H Teen Ambassador. Today the 35-year old is sharing those positive experiences with youngsters by serving as a 4-H leader with a group of five that includes her daughter and son.

For Martin, the journey after high school took a few twists and turns. She attended community college, first at MCC for elementary education and then transferred to FLCC where she changed her major and earned an associate degree in criminal justice. Plans to attend Boston University to pursue a degree in cyber security were halted when she discovered she was pregnant with her second child.

The mother of two, with an interest in security, next worked as a Surveillance Officer at the Finger Lakes Gaming Track in Farmington. This involved watching the gaming floors on 20 different computer monitors and walking the floors throughout the night. “If we saw unusual activity it would be immediately reported to security prior to writing a report.”

At about this time, Martin returned to FLCC, becoming a certified nursing assistant, working both career paths. But an injury changed her direction once again. She got the opportunity to interview as a customer service rep which opened the door to insurance in 2013 and received her personal lines license in 2016.

“I have had many different job experiences,” says Martin. She believes she has truly found her passion is to help people. “Being able to help an insured when they are looking to save money all the way to the unfortunate events.”

“The best advice I was ever given by one of my colleagues was ‘Teach everyone.’ Most insured that you come across have no clue what coverage they are buying. So, teach them what they don’t know. That quote has a lot of meaning and it has taken me years to understand that it is absolutely right on point.”

ATHENA Honor Roll

ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL RECIPIENTS

2021

Mandy Friend Gigliotti

2019

Allison Hildebrandt

2018

Jennie Erdle

2017

Sayeh Rivazfar

2016

Kimberly Sorel

2015

Teresa Deacon

2014

Nadia Harvieux

2013

Erica Bapst

2012

Margaret Meyer

2011

Tracey Fuller

2010

Teresa Pare

PAST ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

2021

Hazel Robertshaw

2007

Barbara Fuge

2006

Janet Tenreiro

2005

Rhoda Childs

2004

Marci Diehl

2003

Karen

Davidson Blazey

2002

Deborah
Weymouth

2014

Deborah Wilbur

2013

Stephanie
Kunes-Mincer

2012

Sharon Gullo

2011

Barbara Risser

2010

Lynne Erdle

2009

Ginny Clark

2008

Deborah
Denome

1997

Theresa Hall

1996

Ellen
Polimeni

1995

Gail Love

1994

Judith M.
Stewart

1993

Linda
Hawks

1992

Joyce Ezrow

1991

Linda Welch

1990

Kay James

1989

Lois
Kozlowski

1988

Gail
Dorr Herman

1987

Barbara
Nelson

1986

Tarry
Shipley

1985

Diane Reed

Congratulations to all
ATHENA Nominees
Let Your *Sparkle*
Shine Through



CROWN
JEWELRY

142 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424
585-394-3115
www.mycrowndowntown.com

I'm Ready to Assist You With Your Real Estate Needs! Call me!



**JANE
GAVETT**

LICENSED ASSOCIATE
REAL ESTATE BROKER



Thinking of Buying or Selling...Call Me!

janevgavett@gmail.com | 585-919-9137

CONGRATULATIONS



FLCC applauds the leadership and dedication demonstrated by this year's nominees, including our Assistant Director of Student Life, Andrea Brown.

Congrats to all past and future ATHENA recipients!

The Arc Ontario would like to offer our sincerest congratulations to all of the 2022 ATHENA Award nominees for this prestigious honor!



3071 County Complex Drive
Canandaigua, NY
(585) 394-7500
www.thearcontario.org

Well-deserved recognition
for all that you have achieved.

Canandaigua National Bank & Trust congratulates all of the ATHENA Award nominees. We admire your enthusiasm for your profession and your community, and your dedication to helping others. These are values we share as well. And it's why we strive to enrich the communities we serve.



Congratulations to our own Michelle Pedzich, nominee for the ATHENA Leadership Award.

investing
in you



Canandaigua
National
Bank & Trust

Call today: (585) 394-4260 | CNBank.com

Member FDIC

ONTARIO COUNTY

Public
HEALTH

Healthy people in
healthy communities!

Contact us
800-299-2995

OntarioCountyPublicHealth.com



RANDALL FARNSWORTH



BUICK

GMC
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE



CADILLAC



CHEVROLET

FOUNDING SPONSOR OF THE ATHENA AWARD IN CANANDAIGUA

Congratulations to the ATHENA Leadership Award nominees
& the ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award nominees.

Thank you for living authentically, learning constantly, advocating fiercely,
acting courageously, fostering collaboration, building relationships and giving
back. We are honored to celebrate each of you & all that you've achieved.



A T H E N A
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

2023 GMC TERRAIN AT4



RANDALL BUICK GMC CADILLAC

5375 Thomas Road - Canandaigua
585-394-0050

FARNSWORTH CHEVROLET

2350 Rochester Road - Canandaigua, NY
585-394-2360

FARNSWORTHGROUP.COM

Cultivating a Customer for Life Culture Since 1917