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25 Women of Excellence in the Poconos

...inside, amazing stories of courage, determination, perseverance, and service
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EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Pocono Business News*, the Pocono Mountains' premier alternative and independent publication established to provide our residents with accounts of business development and growth. As such, *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine* will gather, print, and disseminate positive information about people who have exhibited exemplary leadership in business, industry, education, arts, and the profession, as well as provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, job opportunities, and other information necessary to showcase business and commerce.

Interestingly, the launching of *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine* coincides with our publication's 1st Annual Celebration of Women's History Month in March and the appointment and subsequent confirmation of America's first Black judge, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

But it is no irony of history that the launching of *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine*, Women's



President Biden & Justice Ketanji Brown-Jackson

History Month celebration and the appointment and confirmation of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson happened at the same time. That single events would not be in want of comments and analysis; and many there will be.

Whatever might be the interpretation of the events by shades of opinions, history will record this time as one of greatest manifestation of America's attempt to erase its ugly racist past and move toward a just, peaceful, and humane society.

Nevertheless, to us at *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine*, the appointment of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson demonstrates the kind of profile to which we are committed.

Hence, in our debut on this occasion of history, our first edition is devoted to the profile of some outstanding women in the Poconos area of Northeast Pennsylvania who have demonstrated their contributions to business and, other areas, not only for themselves, but also for mankind. These women, as you will see, epitomize what the

Ghanaian educator Dr. Emmanuel Kwegyir said that, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

The women profiled herein are exemplary leaders, role models who elevate us all despite societal pressures. These women excel in the halls of society, and we could do no better than praise them through the pages of this newsmagazine.

The various backgrounds and activities of the women profiled in this edition also set out the objectives and mission of *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine*. And to all the women herein profiled, we salute you for your dedication, vision, courage, and determination for your crowning achievements as leaders in the daily battles of life.

Again, welcome to *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine*, your go-to paper. We pride ourselves in bringing you positive news and information on the development and growth of business and commerce in our region. We look forward to your continued support as we forge ahead with this publication.

Thank you.

Elseah W. Chea
Managing Editor
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THE POCONO BUSINESS NEWS

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"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." —Harriet Tubman

Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Suffragist Susan B. Anthony, educator and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune, liberation journalist Ida Wells, abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and social reformer and founder of modern day nursing Florence Nightingale—to name a few— would have been amongst the women being honored as “Women of Excellence” had they lived, but death deprived us of the privilege to physically honor these pioneers. Nevertheless, their legacies resonate in the women that we honored “Women of Excellence” on Sunday, March 27. Our honorees are exemplary leaders and role models who elevate us all despite societal pressures. These women excel in the halls of society and we are pleased to present them through the pages of this newsmagazine. *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine* salutes these women for their dedication, vision, courage, determination, and crowning achievements.

-----Profiles written and/or edited by Elseah W. Chea, Founder and Managing Editor. Mr. Chea has an M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia University; B.A., The City College of New York.




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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

According to Coco Brown, ever since she was a little girl, she wanted to her own business.

“Business ownership gives one independence, and I wanted to experience this freedom,” says Coco Brown, the owner of *Coco’s Fresh Fish Market* in East Stroudsburg, PA.

On February 13th 2020, Ms. Brown opened *Coco’s Fresh Fish Market* in the Strawberry Fields Plaza, 730 Milford Road in East Stroudsburg.

“We just celebrated our two years anniversary in business. It’s a great feeling to be my own boss. The restaurant is dedicated to my mother, who was an inspiration my whole life. She was the person who showed me the definition of a great woman,” says the Harlem, New York-raised Ms. Brown.

Coco’s Fresh Fish Market is a full-service Take-out eatery nestled between several shops in the foothills of Plaza Mall in East Stroudsburg. As its name suggests - fresh fish – Coco’s Fresh Fish Market specializes in fresh fish, caught and prepared daily for fish lovers. Menus at the eatery include fish dinners served with a

choice of macaroni and cheese, candied yams, rice, glandules, potato salad, and collard greens with smoke turkey. The eatery also serves vegetables like corn on

Coco Brown Coco Fresh Fish Market

cob, broccoli, carrots, orka, spinach, white potato or sweet potato with choice of seasoning - mild, spicy, jerk, lemon pepper or jerk seasoning with butter and garlic. Breakfast at Coco’s includes grits, salmon croquettes, chicken, waffle, chicken nuggets, and fries for the children. Desserts consist of yellow chocolate cake, lemon cake and banana pudding; appetizers consist of sweet potato fries, onion rings, zucchini sticks, salmon or shrimp empanadas and fried okra and fish sandwiches are available with white or wheat bread.

Coco’s Fresh Fish is open Wednesday to Saturday from 11am to 7pm and accepts all major credit cards and EBT as methods of payment.



tion until November 2022, where she has decided to not seek re-election. While in office, she has become a

Rosemary Brown State Representative—189th Legislative District Monroe/Pike Counties

leader on Lyme Disease and tick-borne illnesses, crafting and establishing the Pennsylvania Free Tick Testing Program, utilizing a state funding to prevent and protect and provide a tool for patients and physicians against long-term illness. She has also several pieces of proposed legislation geared at creating policies to build awareness and support to protecting Pennsylvania residents on this growing disease. Brown has also been a well-known advocate and educator on the Pennsylvania Planned Communities Act and the rights and protections for residents and board members living in private homeowner, condominiums, and co-op associations. Act 17 of 2018 increased the complaints that could be submitted to the Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection division as well as encouraged mediation to reduce unnecessary costly lawsuits. Brown also led the initiative and conversation on limiting the prescribing of controlled substances to no longer than seven days in emergency rooms and urgent cares, spurring the beginning of addiction prevention efforts in Pennsylvania, which is no known at Act 122 of 2018. As a previous member of the House Education Committee, Brown also began the work of holding Financial Literacy Fairs throughout her district to build high school junior and senior students of their real-world financial decisions. Eventually she passed into

law Act. 91 of 2019 which allowed for Financial Literacy Coursework in high school to count towards graduation requirements, incentivizing students to add this coursework to their schedules.

As she completes her sixth term in office, her goals continue to support limited and effective government initiatives that meet the needs of the 189th legislative district and work towards common sense measures that are not geared towards the political arena but towards good policy for short-and long-term solutions. Her focuses continue the above-mentioned topics but also include supporting legislative initiatives that work toward measures to help alleviate the large burden of school property taxes, including state funding and cyber/charter reimbursement formulas, school cost drivers, economic development and more. She also continues her strong focus on reducing distracted driving behaviors with her HB37 proposal to require hands-free cell phone use while driving, working to remove the phone from the driver’s hands and minimize use and overall distraction.

Brown now serves as the majority chairwoman of the House Urban Affairs Committee and the House Transportation Committee. Previously she has served as a majority House Deputy Whip and on the esteemed House Appropriation Committee. She has also served on the House Education, Professional Licensure, Emergency Services and Veteran Affairs, Children and Youth and Insurance Committees.

As she prepares to leave her position in November of 2022, she is looking forward to a new chapter of her life where she can utilize her experience both in the government and the private sector.

State Representative Honorable **Rosemary Brown** was born in Bronx, New York, moving to Monroe County, Pennsylvania when she was five years old. She has called the Poconos “home” ever since.

Brown graduated from East Stroudsburg High School in 1988 and graduated from the University of Scranton in 1992 with a B.A. in Communications and minors in Business and English. She married her childhood sweetheart, Joseph, in 1994 and they have three children, Kennedy, Carter and Reagan.

Brown was employed as an executive sales manager for Macy’s and was then promoted to assistant buyer. She was recruited to Saks Fifth Avenue in New York where she managed a shoe division within the flagship store on Fifth Avenue. She continued her business retail career as a divisional sales manager for The Bon-Ton stores back in Pennsylvania after commuting for several years. After the birth of her first child, she utilized her business background and applied it to the pharmaceutical sales division for Hoffman La-Roche, earning a “Rookie of the Year” award. She continued to sell antibiotics, antivirals, cardiology, neurology, oncology, and ophthalmology medications for Hoffman La-Roche and Vistakon, a division of Johnson & Johnson.

Brown was elected as a republican to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to represent the 189th legislative district in 2010, defeating incumbent John Siptroth (D). She is currently still serving in this posi-

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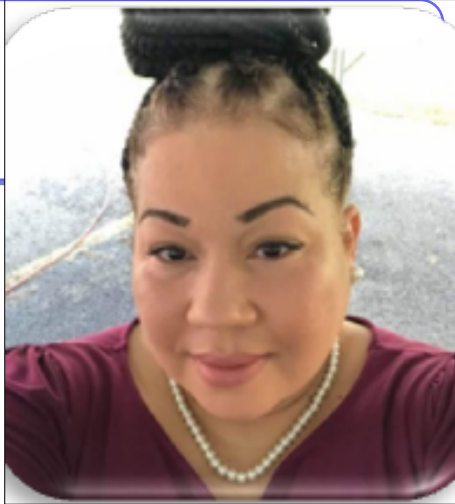


Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Christa Caceres is proud to serve in her second term as president of the Monroe County Branch of the NAACP. She holds a B.A. in Jurisprudence and M.S. in Law and Public Policy from the California University of Pennsylvania.

Christa is a passionate community advocate whose work spans over twenty years from helping non-custodial parents understand their rights in the NYC court system to her current day pursuits of educating others on the ways the law can work for or against them. It was during this time she realized the importance of elected officials and the impact they have on everyday lives and decided to become an active member of society. As a childhood survivor of domestic violence and sexual abuse, she is laser-focused on issues that pertain to women, children and

Christa Caceres President of Monroe County Branch of NAACP



sexual assault victims. In January 2021, she was the recipient of the prestigious Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award from East Stroudsburg University for her endeavors in the community.

Christa's leadership and advocacy also includes membership in several area organizations including the Rotary Club of the Stroudsburgs, holding seats on local advisory committees and serving on the board of directors for organizations including Safe Haven of Pike County for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, The Greater Pike Community Foundation, which creates and manages funds to sustain annual grants and schol-

arships by nonprofits, companies, individuals and municipalities, Pocono Mountains United Way, which assists individuals and families in need in Monroe County through partnership and collaboration, and Emerge Pennsylvania, the premier political candidate training ground in the Commonwealth for Democratic women.

Following recent calls for reform in law enforcement, Christa has taken a proactive approach and formed the Monroe County Community Roundtable in August of 2020 which united the heads of the Pocono Township Police, Stroud Area Regional Police, Monroe County Sheriff's Office and Pocono Mountain Regional Police with Monroe County NAACP to find strategic and creative ways to make lasting changes in our community together.

Mrs. Caceres has been a resident of the Pocono Mountains since 2005, where she enjoys life with her husband of over sixteen years, her beloved son, and two very active dogs.



Barbie Colon Fashion Designer & Radio Personality

Barbie Colon is an On Air Personality on *The Shawn Harvey Morning Show* on FLEX 92.3 FM in Easton.

Barbie appeared as guest host on *The Shawn Harvey Morning Show* in 2018 and because of her energy, she was offered to join the team.

Off the air, Barbie is the President & CEO of Xplosive Creations Salon & Barbie Colon Designs,

creating beauty in the community through hair and fashion.

A self-taught fashion designer, Ms. Colon launched her business in 2015 and is a regular on fashion runways, appearing in places like New York Fashion Week, Lehigh Valley Fashion Week, and other fashion events.

The Newark, NJ native who resides in Easton since 1999, received her associate degree in office administration from Gibbs College in Montclair, NJ and her cosmetology degree from Empire Beauty School in Allentown.

"My life's goal is to be successful in my business ventures, to continue to help others through the charities," says Ms. Colon.

Ms. Colon believes in fighting for just causes, one of which is human trafficking. Currently, she works with the Bloom Foundation in Bethlehem to aide in the fight against human trafficking.

Taraz Crowley, a Monroe County Special Olympics Coordinator, was born in Brooklyn, NY and moved to the Poconos at age 12.

"As early as 12 I knew that in life I wanted to be someone who helped others, someone who always stood up for others who may not have been able to stand up for themselves. Growing up, I watched my mom take care of individuals with special needs and I knew I was going to follow in her footsteps," says Taraz.

When she was a senior in high school, Tabriz's first job was working in a group home with "some really special individu-

Taraz Crowley Special Olympic Coordinator

als. Those individuals taught me a lot about life, about struggle, about love, about compassion, about fear," says Ms. Crowley.

Today, Taraz is a recognized Special Olympics coordinator in Monroe County. Her involvement began in March 2000 and over the past 22 years she has worked to ensure "the athletes have meaningful life experience within the program and their everyday lives.

"Sure our program is a sports program



but there is so much more to it. These individuals face adversity, isolation, bullying, disrespect. They are not given the same opportunities others are given. They are not looked at as being able. They are seen as different. But when I see them, I don't see difference. I see equal, I see able, I see kind, smart, funny, compassionate, I see fierce, I see ready to prove wrong those who doubt them. I stand beside them and fight for inclusion and equality. I work to educate others on inclusion and equality for all these amazing individuals in hopes that one day we won't need to fight," Taraz passionately says.



Rose M. Davis, CPA Davis Management Consulting, Inc.

and/or re-engineer their accounting operations and to enhance their audit readiness ability. She is the founder and owner of Davis Management Consulting, Inc., a financial management consulting firm.

Ms. Davis has an accounting and auditing career that spans over thirty-six years. Her professional career highlights include serving as CFO/controller for a medium size educational services organization where she was responsible for establishing the accounting operations and guiding the organization's financial growth from inception through its eventual expansion into multiple U.S. States and to its final acquisi-

tion by a third party. She has extensive internal and external audit experience and knowledge which was developed and cultivated throughout the many years she worked within the public accounting industry at CPA firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Watson Rice LLP.

Rose Davis currently serves as the chairwoman of the Board of Auditors for Smithfield Township. It is an elected position she has held since 2017.

Over the many years, Ms. Davis has helped a countless number of public and private businesses and not-for-profit organizations refine, develop and enhance their financial operations with success.

Rose Davis is a certified public accountant who helps medium to large size businesses and not-for-profit organizations maintain

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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Lisa Diemer's lifelong love of all things involving the kitchen table came to fruition 12 years ago when she opened her storefront Kitchen Chemistry. She taught classes in cake decorating, baking, soapmaking, cheesemaking,

Lisa Diemer Kitchen Chemistry

candy making, and a variety of other food crafting techniques. She's taught literally thousands of students locally and from around the world, who took their new skills back to their countries to start businesses of their own. She sold products to support these classes as well as a full case



of premium cupcakes. After suffering a devastating fire, her second business, Pocono Soap, was born while waiting for

her bakeshop to be rebuilt. After reopening the bakeshop, she concentrated on training her creative team to create beautiful and detailed specialty and wedding cakes. Her award-winning creations and personal achievements has helped her become renowned in the Poconos as a reliable and dependable business woman. She is the 1st recipient of the first Monroe County Red Shoe Businesswoman of the Year. Her bake shop, and later, her soap shop has been a consistent Winner of the Pocono Record's Reader's Choice Awards every year since its conception.

Throughout her life, community service was always a priority. She served as President of PTA at Arlington Elementary and the Pocono Herb club, Secretary for the Monroe County Garden Club, Wigwam Lake Club and PTA. She delivered weekly for Monroe County Meals on

Wheels for over 10 years. She became a Penn State Master Gardener and served as a presenter for 6 years. As a business owner, she has supported local schools, churches, Essential Workers and countless fundraisers with hands on experiences and donations. She's raised funds for 1% for Nature, Icing Smiles, Pocono Wildlife Preserve just to name a few.

"This community is very much a part of who I am and I simply love having my family's support and hard work to help our businesses grow. I also appreciate the support the community has shown us through out the years."

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There is an age-old saying that "If you want to see change in the world, a change in others, you must first be the change, be the change you wish to see."

Violette Francois heeds this wisdom.

"As I myself was an abused adolescent in the system, I saw the world in a bad light; yet I encountered heroes that acted to effectuate changes in my life. As one of the statistic in the problem of the youth, I then confronted choices to either succumb to the system or rise above it," says Violette.

Instead of taking the low road, the Elizabeth, NJ-born Violette took the high road. Violette is the Founder and Director of *Violette Stand for the Children Home* in the Poconos. Violette's mission is to

provide a structured residential environment for up to 24 youths between the ages of 10 and 17 in a family setting that fosters easy family reunification. There is a planned 'Next-Step' program, a transitional home to further provide care to youths ages 18-26. Violette's 'VSFTC' Home will afford these young adults the expertise they require to integrate into society. The youths learn life skills such as financial planning, job search, home economy.

To sum up her life's goal, Violette says: "My hope is excel as a service leader in the humanitarian sector providing shelter and care to disadvantaged adolescent boys that find themselves in the public welfare system."

Mrs. Francois settled in the Poconos some 30 years ago from New Jersey, where she graduated from Morristown

High School and received a diploma in Surgical Tech from Dover Business College in New Jersey as well. She is cur-

Violette Francois VSFTCH

rently a valued employee with LVHN-Pocono Hospital as a Surgical Tech in the Labor and Delivery Department.

Violette Francois is a happily married mother of two precious boys and a member of the Church of St. John's in Marshall Creek Pennsylvania. She holds membership in the Rotarian-Stroudsburg chapter, a Past President of the local Columbiettes Council and is now serving as a Financial Secretary for the Pennsylvania State Columbiettes.



Owning a home is the ultimate American dream and, **Annette Ifill**, nicknamed "Dot" because of her natural inclination to seek the best for others, helps families to achieve their lifetime dreams of home ownership.

Annette Ifill has over 25 years experience in real estate, working to fulfill dreams of homeownership. She has the distinction of being a Top Producer in the industry.

Annette was born in Barbados but raised in Brooklyn, where she moved with her mother and siblings from Barbados when she was 15 years old. She is the 4th of five children, which includes three sisters and two brothers. Attended and graduated with honors from George Win-



gate High School in Brooklyn. Following high school, Annette matriculated at the Borough of Manhattan Community Col-

Annette Ifill Award-winning Realtor

lege and soon began a career as well in corporate America, working on New York's famed Wall Street with firms like The Royal Bank of Canada as Accounts Manager/Receivables, Oppenheimer Capital, and Insurance Services Office (ISO), all the while commuting to New York from the Poconos where she relocated in 1996.

Annette resigned to seek other opportunities closer to home in the Poconos. She stayed home for a while thinking what she would do next.

"I started filling out job applications for

other jobs but all the companies I interviewed with kept saying the same thing, 'that I was overqualified' so I gave up on that. I was thinking of becoming a truck driver or going to school to become an architect."

But if the saying that every disappointment is a blessing, then Annette's was a windfall, and she credits her husband who suggested that she considers becoming a Realtor.

"I told him there's no way I can do such a job because I don't know how I can deal with people with different personalities, then he said "but you already have the gift of gab" so I said, we'll see. But, I kept thinking about it and after a few months at home, decided to take the real estate classes, then the exam and that's how I became a Realtor."



Beverley Jalim Branch Manager, PNC Bank

Beverley Jalim is a Branch Manager of PNC Bank in east Stroudsburg. She joined the branch in 2017 following a successful banking career at JP Morgan Chase ion New York City.

Ms. Jalim migrated to the United States in 1988 from the island of St. Lucia in the heart of the Caribbean. She lived in Brooklyn, where she attended and gradu-

ated from Sarah J. Hale High School in Brooklyn. Following high school, she briefly enrolled at Medgar Evers College before beginning a banking career.

Ms. Jalim began her banking career with JP Morgan Chase Bank as a teller in 1993 and progressed to Assistant Branch Manager. In July 2017, she joined PNC Bank.

"What has been most fulfilling throughout my career is being able to serve the community by assisting and educating with their financial needs and hoping that I make a difference in each person's life

through every interaction," says Beverley.

Beverley is married to her husband Egbert Jalim of 20 years and together the couple has two boys - Jamil Joseph and Kyle Jalim. She is the grandmother of 4-year-old grandson, Kai Joseph.

Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Stefania Johnson
COO/Lead Host, *The Sistahship, LLC*

Stefania Johnson is a mentor, entrepreneur, business professional, community activist, poet, blogger, radio personality, analytical thinker, and a spiritual woman. Mrs. Johnson is a Senior Manager in the consumer-packaged goods industry.

Born and raised in Passaic, NJ to Guglielmo and Maria who migrated from It-

aly to the US in the 60's, Stefania is the eldest of four girls. Stefania notes that she is "blessed with being a proud auntie to 11 amazingly artistic, creative, and intelligent nieces and nephews, as well as Godmother to two of them."

A first generation American, Stefania graduated from Passaic High School in 1991 and is the first in her family to attend college, earning a bachelor's in science from Berkeley College. In 2007, Stefania, along with her husband, Darren A. Johnson, a Newark, NJ native, moved in their new home in Monroe County. "I will be celebrating 10 years of marriage

this year to my best friend of 21 years," says Stefania.

In 2017, Stefania started Stef's Blings N Things, LLC and in 2021 became the a Lead Host and COO for The Sistahship Network on Gynesis Radio to highlight social issues and causes dear to her. Stefania is a trained and certified in Lean Six Sigma. She is also a Green Belt in Taekwondo.

Mrs. Johnson loves music and says she has an "eclectic taste for it." She enjoys cooking, the arts, plays, operas and all forms of dance.

Before her election to represent the 115th Legislative District, State Representative **Maureen Madden** was an educator at Northampton Community College communications and

East Stroudsburg University, where she saw the impact of the budget cuts placed on universities due to decreased state funding. Hence, predicated on the age-old saying to "be the change you want to see," she endeavored to sit at the table where decisions are made. Maureen Madden sought for an elected office and was in November 2016, overwhelmingly elected PA State Representative representing the 115th District.

Maureen Madden has never wavered in her for the causes for which she sought public office. In her role as a State Representative, Ms. Madden's priorities include increasing higher education funding by eliminating corporate tax breaks, reforming property taxes, and securing ad-



Maureen Madden
State Representative
115th District

ditional state funding for basic education so public schools are fairly funded. She supports increasing the minimum wage

and equal pay for equal work, and also will fight for additional state funding for local infrastructure projects, which will create jobs and improve communities.

Madden supports a moratorium on fracking of natural gas until safety measures are put in place to ensure that drinking water is safe and the risk of leaks are decreased. She also supports an extraction tax on natural gas companies so all Pennsylvanians can benefit from the growing industry. She is a strong advocate for women's health and a woman's right to choose, as well as equal protections for LGBT residents.

Moreover, Ms. Madden sits on several committees and Caucuses, including but not limited to Education, Gaming Over-

sight, Human Services Policy Committee, State Government Northeast Delegation, Chairwoman and Climate Caucus, Ski Caucus, Co-Chair, Cannabis Caucus, Early Childhood Education Caucus, Hope Caucus, Labor Caucus, LGBTQ Equality Caucus, PA SAFE Caucus, Women's Caucus, Women's Health Caucus.

State Representative Maureen Madden was born in Irvington, Essex County, NJ. She graduated from Hackettstown High School in 1977. Ms. Madden holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Marymount Manhattan College and an M.B.A. in communications from Marywood University.

Ms. Madden was born in Irvington, Essex County, NJ. She graduated from Hackettstown High School.

An avid music lover, she is the founder and manager of Mo Better Music (1995-present).

Nytica established a safety net for youths—Success Investing For The Youth, or SIFTY. The goal, as she says, is to "provide youth programs that teach the importance of learning and being responsible, and in creating fun interactive learning environments where kids can learn from each other."

In addition to SIFTY, Nytica has registered a fashion line—SIFTY-Styles—which provides fashion for kids only.

Nytica Mclean
SIFTY Association

"The purpose of this brand is to give kids something to call their own.," Nytica says.

Nytica is passionate about the youth and is constantly looking for ways to create a balance in their lives.

Nytica's name is synonymous with Easter, as she holds an Easter Hunt where kids are engaged in hands-on learning activities.

"In my opinion growing youth responds better to mentorship from young adults that appear to be able to relate more to their current or past circumstances. To me it's combining the lecture and the lesson and sending a more relatable messenger in their eyes to get the message across," says Nytica.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, Nytica was

raised in the Poconos. She graduated from East Stroudsburg North High School.

Nytica moved to Allenton in 2014, where she coached an AAU basketball



team and entered the team in the "Labor of Love" tournament in Stroudsburg.

Nytica is a Skillful and enthusiastic basketball player. She continues to play the sport to date, as well as runs SIFTY.

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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

I am Stroudsburg Mayor Tarah Probst, and I was the first female Mayor in the borough's history.

I was first elected in November 2015. I will be running for PA House of Representatives in the 189th district.

I was born and raised in East Stroudsburg and have lived in northeast Pennsylvania all my life. I was raised by my mother, my grandmother, and my aunt, along with my 3 brothers. I earned my Law degree from Widener University School of Law in 2003 and my bachelor's degree from King's College in 1992. While I lived in the Wyoming Valley for some time, Stroudsburg was always home. I moved back to Stroudsburg in 2010 and in 2013 my husband and I bought our home in the beautiful borough of Stroudsburg.

I have spent my career in marketing, helping business owners grow and connect. My career has had me talking with people, understanding their needs and helping them. That is what I do, and I will continue to do it in government. In 2016 I left the corporate world and my husband and I opened up a downtown restaurant to support our town and to be a part of the community I was newly elected to serve. We sold the Charcuterie on Main St. in September 2018 to Renegade Winery and we're so proud of what they have done. In 2019, I took a part time job as a Regional Account Coordinator at Brookdale Premier Addiction Recovery. I love getting people the help they need, and I've learned so much through the process. I am so fortunate to love what I do for Brookdale and Stroudsburg Borough.

I was elected the first female mayor in November 2015 in over 200 years of Stroudsburg's history, and I never looked back. As mayor, I've been a part of REAL change and anyone will tell you that I take every call, all

the time, and am a proud ambassador of the town I love. I work with our citizens and businesses every day to address their concerns and solve their issues. I have

Tarah Probst Mayor of Stroudsburg

brought significant positive change and business growth to Stroudsburg, along with increased media attention. I have worked hard to make our town a better place to live, work, and visit.

In my work as mayor, I have also worked on many issues facing our greater region. I have worked with other municipalities, our county commissioners, and with our legislators in Harrisburg and Washington D.C. to address regional issues we all face. I was also chosen as 1 of only 20 elected officials in the country for The Champions Institute / Smart Growth for improving lives by improving communities. This is a national complete streets coalition, with the hopes of a healthier America.

With the 2020 Census and the legislative map changes to have fair districts, the new 189th district makes sense. It covers the East Stroudsburg, Stroudsburg, and Delaware Valley school districts. It is the areas I grew up in, it has connectivity to the borough of Stroudsburg, and I want to help this region prosper, the way I have helped Stroudsburg. We are all in this together. With that being said, I will be running for Pennsylvania State House of Representatives for the new 189th district in 2022. I am excited to serve the people of this region and vote for real change to help all of us.

It is this background, experience, drive, and determination, along with my proven leadership that can help me



serve the 189th. I am on the Stroud Area Regional Police Commission, Stroudsburg Neighborhood Watch, the Codes Committee, the I-80 Task Force Committee, the Council of Governments. I chair the Streets Department Committee as well as the Public Relations Committee. I am also on the BWA board, the 450 Project board, Monroe, Carbon and Pike Roundtable Behavioral Health Committee and HSPS Reg Task Force working with Stroud Township, Pocono Township and Hamilton Township. I work for everyone, and it is my HONOR to serve you now and in the future.

Juliette Ryan-Caines recently retired from Exploria Resorts, where she worked as a Housekeeping Supervisor.

Juliette Ryan-Caines Volunteer EMT

"I have embraced retirement, while continuing my volunteering services with Bushkill Emergency Corps and Bushkill Fire Company Auxiliary and running daily," says Juliette.

Juliette was born in England. She immigrated to the US in 1980 and lived in



New York City for years before relocating to the Poconos with her family in 2002.

Juliette Ryan-Caines is known for her volunteerism. As such, she volunteered at the Middle Smithfield Public Library and the Bushkill Outreach Food Pantry for many years. She signed on as a volunteer member of the Bushkill Fire Company Auxiliary in 2007 and remains a member to present. Juliette is also a volunteered member of the Bushkill Emergency Corps to date and she officially became an Emergency Medical Technician EMT in 2014.

Juliette has varied hobbies. She notes that she enjoys reading, exercising, and "all kinds of sports activities, especially running."

Though Juliette considers herself an amateur marathon runner, she has completed 25 full competitions, along with numerous half marathons.

Juliette Ryan-Caines lives with her husband and two children in East Stroudsburg. She is a beloved member of Light of the Word Church, where she continues to volunteer in many church. She serves as an usher.

"I am still pursuing my love for running," according to her.

Tina "Byrd" Scott is the owner of The World-Famous Scottie's Comedy Lounge.

The mother of mother of five children (three biological and two extended), along with 6 grandchildren, Tina was born in North Carolina and moved to Yonkers, New York when she was a young child. She is the oldest of 7 children, which comprises 5 girls and 2 boys.

A former daycare owner and healthcare professional, Tina relocated to East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania in 2006 but commuted to work in New York until her retirement in 2022.

Tina Scott shares that she is a breast cancer survivor and it will be 18 years this June since she has been free. Tina Scott is thankful to God and credits her husband, Scottie, for helping her through the years.

"My husband has a passion for laughter! He loves his family," says Tina.

With enduring love, Tina joined her husband, Scottie, to establish an entertainment business, The World-Famous Scottie's Comedy Club in East Stroudsburg.

Tina "Byrd" Scott The world Famous Scottie's Comedy Club

"I am looking forward to this new chapter in our lives as we embark on our journey to entrepreneurship," says Tina.



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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Stroud Township Supervisor Jennifer Shukaitis is a lifelong Monroe County resident whose family lineage dates back over 300

Jennifer Shukaitis Supervisor of Stroud Township

years here in the upper Delaware River Valley. Jennifer is the oldest grandchild of former Monroe County Commissioner and environmental advocate, Nancy Michael Shukaitis, and she has inherited the same passion for public service and advocating for protecting our natural resources. Jennifer worked together with her grandmother and edited Nancy's his-

torical book on the region, Lasting Legacies of the Lower Minisink, sparking a greater desire to serve her community.



Jennifer Shukaitis was born and raised in the Borough of East Stroudsburg where she graduated from East Stroudsburg Area School District. She then completed her bachelor's degree in biology from East Stroudsburg University, and then went on to complete her master's degree in Anatomy with a Concentration in Neurobiology from Colorado State University. She returned from Fort Collins and managed The Christmas Factory in Marshalls Creek for 14 years.

Ms. Shukaitis currently works for Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono as a medical coding specialist, and serves the roles of Vice Chairwoman and Assistant Secretary in her elected position as a Stroud Township Supervisor.

Jennifer currently volunteers on several boards, including Stroud Region Open

Space and Recreation Commission and the Act 137 Housing Authority Board. She serves as Secretary of the Brodhead Watershed Association and Vice Chair of the Monroe County Democratic Committee.

Jennifer lives in Stroud Township with her two golden retrievers and enjoys exploring the open space available throughout the region. She believes in the importance of participation in our democratic process and holding ourselves accountable for the good of the community and the benefit of future generations.

"The best way for anyone to start is by getting to know your neighbors and spending just a few hours a month helping out a local organization."



Stacy Stewart-Keeler S&B Lighting, LLC

Stacy Stewart-Keeler is the President & CEO of sales management business, S&B Lighting, LLC, founded since 2008. Her company provides mobile notary public services to seniors. She also acts as an agent for Bankers Life & Casualty Company Insurance providing insurances, and legal services like Legalshield & IDShield.

The Brooklyn, NY native moved to the Poconos in 2006 from Yonkers, NY. She received her education in Elementary Education and Psychology from Cazenovia College and Syracuse University.

Stacy Stewart-Keeler is a seasoned sales professional. She spent over 40 years as a sales professional, working with Fortune 500 companies.

An immediate past Councilwoman member of the borough of Mt. Pocono, Stacy holds memberships NAACP, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), AARP, Democratic Party and AAN local chapters in Monroe County. She is also a member of Zeta Phi Beta

Sorority. She currently sits on the board for the Pocono Mountain Public Library and I've been Secretary of Mt Pocono Rotary Club for 15 years.

Mrs. Stacy Stewart-Keeler is married 28 years with two grown sons. She has lived in Mt. Pocono since 2006.

Tatiwana Lynn Boulware-Sutton is a Paterson, New Jersey native. Upon graduation from Paterson High school, Tatiwana enrolled in a medical assistance program in Paramus, NJ in 1990; while pursuing her studies, Tatiwana distinguished herself by presenting an externship proposal to Saint Joseph's Hospital. The program was adopted and to date continues as a curriculum at Saint Joseph's Hospital. And thanks to her ingenuity, Tatiwana earned an externship within the Pathology department and was hired to work full time before completing her degree.

Tatiwana later relocated to East

Stroudsburg, PA in 1997, where the concern for humanity dictates her life. A phenomenon woman, Tatiwana is known for

Tatiwana Sutton Community Service

her giving spirit, her community service. She started the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas drives in East Stroudsburg a few years ago and these events have become much anticipated by residents who are in need of clothing and Thanksgiving meals.

Tatiwana has been featured in the local press for her selfless community service.

Tatiwana is known as the family



"doctor and nurse" by her family and friends. She is credited for providing excellent care for her aunt and 94-year-old grandmother without seeking any formal medical care during their health challenges. She played the doctor. She also provided similar care and attention to niece during her own health challenge.

Tatiwana works as a Biological Service Technician at Sanofi Pasteur.

She is a dedicated and loving wife to Reverend Tyrone Sutton and is a "Glam Ma" to her beautiful granddaughter, Nova Lee, who is the "apple of her eye!"



Dr. Uchenna Ufondu MB BS, M.D., FAAP Board Certified Pediatrician

Dr. Uchenna Ufondu, MB BS, M.D., FAAP is a Board Certified Pediatrician who has been in practice since 1997.

A well-loved doctor, Dr. Ufondu runs a medical practice with her medical partner and husband, Dr. Solibe Ufondu, M.D., also a Board Certified Family Physician in East Stroudsburg in Pennsylvania. Dr. Ufondu has gained a reputation of rendering an excellent pediatric care to her patients from newborn to 20 years of age.

The practice is fully-computerized with devices ranging from automatic appointment reminders to electronic medical record system with integrated electronic prescription, lab, and radiology interface capabilities allowing for excellent and seamless coordination of care. She has an excellent office staff that is caring, respectful, and compassionate. And, of course, she gives utmost care to

patients.

Dr. Ufondu's philosophy at her practice is to "give care without compromise."

At such, she strives to build relationships built on trust and mutual respect with her young patients, whom she refers to as her children.

"At my practice, our team strives to be efficient, says Dr. Ufondu.

Dr Uchenna Ufondu's humble beginnings began in Nigeria, where she was born and received her primary and secondary education. She matriculated and graduated from the University of Jos, a prestigious medical school in Nigeria in 1991.

Empowered by the desire to seek advanced knowledge in medicine, Dr. Ufondu migrated to America in 1992, settling in New Jersey, where she studied further at the University Hospital of Newark, New Jersey for her residency in pediatrics.

Dr. Uchenna Ufondu is affiliated with Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono in East Stroudsburg, PA and St. Luke's Hospital in Stroudsburg, PA. She is accepting new patients.

Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Jacquelyn Wells Host, Real Talk & Founder, J Spot Youth Depot

For Jacquelyn Wells, life turned out so well that it surprises her, given that she was a teen mother before her graduation from high school and, society, even many family members had already written her off. But nothing triumphs determination. She was resilient. She was determined. She promised herself to rise beyond the mediocrity of survival. She refused to become just another statistics. Most of all, Jacquelyn believed in the power of God to deliver her to what she was destined for.

Today, Jacquelyn Wells, affectionately known as “Jackie,” is a role model, mentor, and a beacon of light to young people in the Pocono area.

Jackie is a success story.

The Jersey City, New Jersey native was raised by her father with the assistance of her paternal grandparents. She was educated in the Jersey City Public School System. She excelled in her studies, ranking top of her high school graduating class of 1983.

Determined to support herself and her infant child, young mother Jackie landed a job at Provident Savings Bank following her high school graduation. She worked full time as a Loan Processor. She also enrolled in college and went to classes with her infant son. Jackie

eventually graduated Magna Cum Laude with her Associate degree in 1988. She was also on the Dean’s List.

Jackie was offered a job with the federal government in 1989 and thereon began a career that spanned 30 years until her retirement.

With an insatiable desire for learning and for self improvement, Jackie continued her education years later after leaving her federal job and obtained her bachelor’s degree in Business Administration, along with certifications in safety, security, and business entities in 2017.

Jackie moved to the Poconos in August 2004 and brought her background and experience to the East Stroudsburg School District, where she served as a School Safety Officer.

During her tenure as School Safety Officer, Jackie developed an after-school program called “REAL TALK” which provided students with a forum to address sensitive adolescent issues in a non-judgmental environment. Jackie also founded *The J Spot Youth Depot*, a not-for-profit community outreach program whose purpose is to impact the lives of adolescents and youth.

Under her guardianship, *The J Spot Youth Depot* sponsors community events such as Black History Month, Book Drive, Women’s History Month Book Drive, Annual Book Bag Drive, Thanksgiving Basket Drive, and Annual Angel Tree Toy Drive.

“As a mother and grandmother, it’s important to be the missing link to families who need hope,” says Jackie.

Congresswoman **Susan Wild** is a mother, attorney, public servant, and a dedicated member of the Greater Lehigh Valley community for more than 30 years.

The daughter of a journalist and a career Air Force officer, she was born at Wiesbaden Air Force Base in West Germany, and spent her childhood on Air Force bases across our country and around the world—an experience that shaped her lifelong commitment to the families that serve and sacrifice alongside our service members. After years of moving around, she finally found a place to call home when she settled in the Lehigh Valley to start her family. Susan built a successful legal practice in the Valley while raising her two children, Clay and Addie, and later became the first woman to be appointed Allentown’s City Solicitor. In November 2018, she made history again when she was elected as the first woman to represent Pennsylvania’s 7th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Susan’s legislative priorities include lowering prescription drug prices, expanding Medicare, supporting labor and education, addressing the climate crisis, and supporting PA-07’s thriving manufacturing sector, to continue to grow PA-07’s economy to bring more good-paying jobs to our community. She serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Education and Labor Committee, the House Ethics Committee, and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee. Susan has shown her commitment to providing bipartisan leadership and working across the aisle by working on legislation with both Republican and Democratic colleagues. In addition to her committee work, she is a Vice Chair of the Labor Caucus and a Co-Chair of the Climate Change Taskforce in the New Democrat Coalition.

She is a respected leader in Congress on lowering the cost of prescription drugs. Susan led a letter of frontline Democrats urging that Medicare finally be allowed to negotiate the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs and that the lower negotiated rates be available to everyone, not just those on Medicare. She fought for and secured crucial changes to the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) to address drug costs. She led 27 freshman House Democrats in a letter calling for negotiations to be re-opened so changes could be made to protect consumers from excessive increases in drug prices as well as to strengthen labor standards and environmental terms. With these improvements secured by

Susan, the AFL-CIO and United Steelworkers endorsed the USMCA and it was ultimately passed into law by a huge bipartisan majority vote in the House of 385 to 41.

Since the loss of her long-time partner to suicide in May 2019, Susan has become an outspoken advocate for mental health and suicide prevention initiatives both federally and locally. Since joining Congress, she has

Susan Wild Congresswoman, 7th District

introduced legislation including the *Greater Mental Health Access Act*, the *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act*, and the *Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act* – all legislation to expand access to mental health care. Her amendment to the *Dignity in Aging Act* to provide for mental health screenings for seniors was included in the final legislation signed into law by President Trump.

Susan has been a leading advocate for Pennsylvania workers, retirees, and families. She strongly supported the *Butch Lewis Act* in the 116th Congress and helped ensure a long-term solution as part of the *American Rescue Plan Act* to protect the pension benefits that many union workers and retirees earned with a lifetime of work. In the 117th Congress, she led more than 200 Democrats in the House to call for strong labor standards, like paying a prevailing wage, for any federal investment in clean energy and infrastructure.

In addition, she has fought to bring home hundreds of millions of dollars in federal education funding to ensure every child and student in the Lehigh Valley receives a world class education, she has championed efforts to lower the cost of higher education so every person can afford to access a college degree or job training program, she has advanced several pieces of legislation to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect so all our children have a safe childhood, and she has championed efforts to make child care more affordable and available so children and working parents can thrive.

She knows that representing the people of PA-07 is an extraordinary privilege, and Susan is committed to delivering results for our community. As an independent-minded Member of Congress, her focus is on serving all her constituents—regardless of whether they identify as Republicans, Democrats, Independents, or none-of-the-



above. Rep. Wild believes that mindless partisanship has no place in a functioning government—and she’s doing her part to put an end the harmful “us vs. them” attitude by working with both Democratic and Republican colleagues to find common ground and get things done. That’s why 77% of the bills she has introduced and cosponsored are bipartisan bills. And over 60% of the votes she has cast during her time in Congress have been bipartisan votes. Susan is proud to be independently rated as one of the most bipartisan members of Congress by the Lugar Center. In fact, she ranked among the top 30% of bipartisan members in either party in the Lugar analysis.

Susan chose the Lehigh Valley as her home more than 30 years ago, after a lifetime of moving all over the country with her military family. Her children were born and raised here and the Valley is truly her home. Susan is a leader driven by her passion for the Lehigh Valley, and her dedication to serving the its people. She is committed to fighting for equality, affordable health care for all, an economy that benefits every member of our community, and reforming our political system to return government to the American people. For her, representing PA-07 in Congress is the honor of a lifetime, and she thanks her constituents every day for entrusting her with this responsibility.

Women of Excellence in the Poconos

It can be said that those who make history, do so not only for themselves but for others. And retired US Army veteran Claudette Williams is an example.

Claudette is currently one of Mt. Mount Pocono's Borough Councilwomen. She served the borough as a former Police Commissioner and President of the council. She has the distinction of being the first woman of color to be elected to this position. Ms. Williams is also the former Chair of the Monroe County Democratic Committee; again, the first African-American to hold the chair of any political party in Monroe County, Pennsylvania. She is the creator and CEO of the first Women Veteran Museum in the state of Pennsylvania. She is known for being everywhere a life can be changed and a young mind can be inspired and developed.

Drawing upon her experience from her roles as a Sergeant Major in the United States Army, private, and government sectors, as well as her life experience, Claudette's position in leadership has served as a steppingstone and platform building.



Born in the island nation of Jamaica, Claudette immigrated to the United States in 1980. She initially settled in Brooklyn, NY, where she received her secondary school education. Ms. Williams enlisted in the US Army Reserve in 1985 as a reservist while in college taking advantage of the split option training offered by the military. Her career in the United States Army spanned 30 years, rising to the rank of Army Sergeant Major before she retired from the service. But given her

experience, Claudette Williams was mobilized in 2003 in support of Opera-

Claudette Williams Mt. Pocono Councilwoman

tion Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and then again in 2010 in support of Operation New Dawn which ended in 2014 when she came home as a member of the wounded Warrior program and retired.

A mother of four children, three biological and one extended family member, Claudette Williams move to Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania in 1998.

"I moved from my home in New York City to Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania. I wanted to be in a new environment with the best resources, including good schools, a strong community, and a home I could call my own, hoping it would be the best and last move of my life," says Ms. Williams.

Since her relocation to the Pocono area, Claudette has been advocating for the quality of life issues, like protection of our natural resources — clean air,

clean water, open, and quality services for our aging population so they can live with a measure of independence and dignity. She is known for being everywhere a life can be changed and a young mind can be inspired and developed. Drawing upon her experience from her roles as a Sergeant Major in the United States Army, private, and government sectors, as well as her life experience. Claudette's position in leadership has served as a steppingstone and platform building and, most of all, to put an end to divisiveness and fear.

To ensure her objectives are met, Claudette Williams has run and continues to campaign for elected positions.

"I can help make the changes Pennsylvania needs with the same drive to succeed," Claudette Williams says to encourage every generation. She believes that we all play a part in this world, and we are a part of the whole regardless of where we are in our life. She believes in the scripture "to whom much is given much is required."



Patricia Womack-Elston Founder, I Am Radiant

As such, she immerses herself in activities where she can make an impact. Whether it's planning an event, chauffeuring community kids to and fro, cooking and serving the less fortunate and homeless, even volunteering at nursing homes, coordinating book bag drives, Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket drives, clothing drives for Angel Tree and Serenity Kids as well as Cancer awareness with Pocono Women For Christ/Beautiful WINGS or serving with Born Again Ministries, Patricia is always only an ear shouts away.

Patricia earned her bachelor's with honors in Business Administration/Management from Monroe College in the Bronx and her bachelor's in Counseling from Born Again Christian College. She is a Certified Purpose Coach with Global Institute and is currently pursuing her certification for Womb Wellness with

Yoniversity Online Training Academy.

An ordained Minister, Patricia, known as a Health and Wellness ambassador, moved to the Poconos in 2003. She is the founder of *I Am Radiant - She Is A Jewel* <http://Sheisajewel.com>, a company she uses to raise awareness about the toxicity of tampons use by women, especially young teens who suffer in silence the pains of heavy bleeding and unhealthy menstrual cycles. She sells feminine products known as Reign Sanitary Napkins. These are 3-dimensional layer and leak guard sides that provide extra protection against leakage during feminine menstrual cycle. Reign pads are infused with Nobel Prize Winning material "Graphene" and are popular among young women.

A married mother of three children - David, Tiffany, Chanayse and a beautiful granddaughter, Navii Grace - Patricia is a member of a multicultural all women's group, Sestranow, LLC. The group is dedicated to fostering a sisterhood in

which every member is empowered to reach her full potential and prosper physically, emotionally, and financially.

"We believe that the time is NOW to transcend the divisiveness that we experience especially in today's political and social climate, fueled by racism, sexism, homophobia, disability status, ageism, etc. The time is NOW to tap into our strengths, talents and abilities and form a network free of the obstacles perpetuated by the patriarchy. At the core we women are caring, passionate and nurturing. A woman's nature is to build and thrive despite whatever comes her way. The time is NOW to promote a genuine sisterhood of prosperity, health, and love. Imagine a world where those values are paramount, rather than selfishness, greed, and power," says the group's website.

Some people are just naturally thoughtful of others. And without a doubt the statement can be attributed to Patricia Womack-Elston, a native of the Bronx, New York who moved to the Poconos in 2003.

Patricia Trish Womack-Elston, the Co-Host of The Sistas Network, believes that her purpose on earth is to help others.

Shay Wright is the owner of Seafood Soulplates, a catering and restaurant business in the Poconos.

Shay was born and raised in the Bronx, New York City where she graduated from Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School. Following graduation from high school, she enrolled and obtained her bachelor's degree from the State University at New Delhi.

Ms. Wright moved to the Poconos in 2012 and in 2018 began her restaurant and catering business.

"I aspire to cook for people's souls. I feel like the best way to show someone love is through their stomach," says Ms. Wright whose interest in cooking is Caribbean-inspired.

"From memories of a kitchen filled



Shay Wright Owner, Seafood Soulplates

brain through my heart to my fingers. Cooking holds reminiscences of recipes from generations. Cooking has always been intriguing to me, watching my mother cook in the kitchen, remembering recipes that were my favorite."

with black love and Caribbean seasoning, recipes flow like memories from my

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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Yard sales are traditionally seasonal, limited to specific times of the year, especially in the spring. However, for Jean Yetter, owner of Year Round Yard Sale, it's a passion turned into a business. Jean Yetter's Year Round Yard Sale business is a sanctuary for year round bargain hunters.

Ms. Jean Yetter, born and raised in East Stroudsburg, began her business in 1987, and is celebrating 35 years this year. As the story goes, Jean's father sold farm equipment from his huge warehouse in East Stroudsburg when she was a young girl. Jean watched in admiration and respect as her father ran the family business. Long after the family business ceased, the adventurous, inquisitive, and

Jean Yetter Owner, Year Round Yard Sale

budding entrepreneur Jean conducted an experimental yard sale in the warehouse and loved the idea.

"I really enjoyed the experience. I loved meeting and conversing with all the people who stopped by for the sale," Ms. Yetter shares.

Ms. Jean Yetter has operated her all-year round yard sale business since, housed in a patriotically colored—red, white, and blue—6000 square foot, two buildings located at 218 Twin Falls Road, East Stroudsburg, PA.

A bonanza for bargain shoppers, Ms. Yetter's Year Round Yard Sale con-



tains 10 rooms complete with new and pre-owned household and fancy items, including jewelry, women's accessories, home décor, novelties, collectibles, and other nostalgic bits and pieces for all and any occasion.

Jean Yetter's Year Round Yard Sale is open Thursday—Sunday from 10:00AM—5:00PM.

"I love this business and the people who visit my store," says Jean Yetter.



Jack Signorelli



and make everyone understand what it is and why it is there.

2. Reconnect with former clients. It's 7 to 10 times more costly to acquire new clients than it is to sell to current or former clients.

3. Generate new sales from current clients with a new product offering. Expanding your revenue per sale.

4. Sharpen your tools -Most salespeople don't spend enough time working on improving their sales skills and techniques. If your business is slower in the summer, take the time to learn how to sell more effectively and get involved in a sales coaching program. Begin now by putting your own plan in place to sharpen your sales skills and hone your sales techniques. Great salespeople do

not blame the seasons for their slump.

5. Increase sales activities - In the summer months companies and salespeople cut their sales activities. They actually have said to me, "If we are not going to sell anything, what is the point?" It is completely backwards thinking and the type of thinking that will keep you exactly where you are. Increasing your sales activity will increase sales results.

6. Don't believe the hype - One of the biggest problems with this summer slump chatter is that salespeople use the chatter to fuel the fire and make excuses about themselves and their business. People tend to believe everything they hear and see instead of challenging the summer slowdown belief. If you perceive no one is around and everyone is on vacation then you are setting yourself

up for a negative self-fulfilling prophecy and your sales will take a long siesta.

7. Mix business with pleasure. Schedule a summer client party at the pool, park, or baseball stadium. Schedule lunches or coffees with past clients, or invite your "A" list of people over for a barbecue. Get creative and mix business with pleasure- it's a great way to enjoy the summer AND generate new business. I have found client parties are a great way to drive new sales and have fun!

8. Refine and increase your marketing efforts. Analyze what's working for you and what isn't. Can you improve your methods? Is it your message?

—Jack Signorelli is a Certified Business Coach and former U.S. Marine. His career spanned 27 years in Corporate America culminating as President of Konica Business Technologies, (now Konica-Minolta), a \$1 Billion distributor of office products and services. Under Jack's leadership the company grew revenues more than \$100 million. Jack owns two small businesses and since 1996 he has been providing practical advice to business leaders, in all industry segments, throughout the U.S.

Strategies to Avoid the Summer Slump

1. Set a sales target. It may sound obvious but if you don't have something to aim for then you won't know when you have succeeded. You shouldn't have just a monthly sales target, if times are tight then this should be weekly. Write it on a board so the whole company can see it



Take It or Leave It ... Right Now!

Ever watch the game show Let's Make A Deal? A costume clad audience member is faced with several prize options and must make an instant decision as to which to choose. Curtain #1? Maybe curtain #3? The prize choice must be made quickly; after all, it's only a 30 minute show!

Some salespeople ask for an instant decision from their customers. With a one-time customer, as with a retail sale, asking for a quick decision is expected. After all, in retail, the mall closes at 9, and customers must vacate the premises. But when building a long-term relationship with a customer, salespeople might want to rethink the quick sale approach.

"Take it or leave it...right now" might make a potential long-term customer sprint away faster than the Road Runner. Build a relationship with a long-term customer by avoiding hard-sell, I-need-a-decision-right-now-or-nothing pressure. Instead of demanding an instant decision, ask your customer for a time you can visit or call to get a decision. With a returning customer, take the time to build the relationship. The return on your patience might just be a life-long client.

—Gail Lewis, M.A., teaches Communications and is a corporate trainer with The Communication Depot (www.TheCommunicationDepot.com); and never passes up an opportunity to watch Star Trek.

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Women of Excellence in the Poconos

The Pocono Business News 1st Annual Women's History Month Celebration

On Sunday, March 27, *The Pocono Business News* in recognition of Women's History Month held its 1st Annual Women's History Month Celebration. Over 25 women were awarded *Women of Excellence in the Poconos Award*. Professor Gail Lewis emceed event. —Shawn Brown, Photographer



Emcee Ms. Gail Lewis



State Representative and honoree R. Brown



Rev. Tyrone gives benediction



Organizers Elseah Chea and Gerald Scott with State Rep. Rosemary Brown, an honoree.



Editor Elseah Chea acknowledges honorees



Operations Manager DJ Strategiee makes remarks



Honoree Dr. U. Ufondu receives award



Honoree S. Johnson receives award



Honoree B. Jalim receives award



Honoree C. Caceres receives award

Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Honoree P. Womack-Elston receives award



Honoree T. Sutton receives award



Honoree B. Colon receives award



Honoree J. Wells receives award



Honoree J. Ryan-Caines receives award

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Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Honoree P. Womack-Elston receives award



Honoree B. Colon receives award



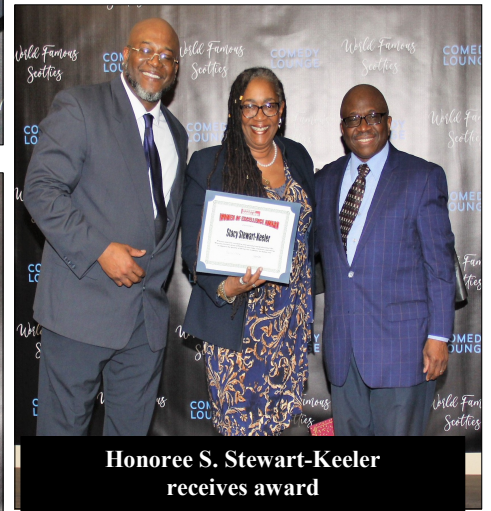
Honoree T. Crowley receives award



Honoree Nytica Mclean receives award



S. Wright receives award



Honoree S. Stewart-Keeler receives award



Honoree C. Brown receives award



Members of Distinctive Lady Ryders MC receives award



V. Francois receives award



Mt. Pocono Councilwoman C. Williams, an honoree, receives award



Honoree T. Scott receives award

**Congratulations
to our
Honorees!**

Distinctive Lady Ryders MC

Distinctive Lady Ryders MC is a diverse all-female Poconos-based motorcycle club established in July 2013. The women are professionals, each with a career and aspirations. Mo' Chocolate, President of the club, is an Assistant Director of Detox Program/Detox and Rehab. She holds an MSW and a CASAC-M Certificate; Lady Charlie, Vice President, earned her BSW and drives an 18-wheeler tractor trailer; Lady Medic, is an EMS First Responders; Lady J is a high school teacher in New York; Mz. Jerzie Girl, a New Jersey native, is a CDL driver; Lady Twin is a mailroom Supervisor at a college in New Jersey; Lady Spice works with underprivileged adults; Lady Sergeant is a retired US Army veteran, with 30 years' service.

Distinctive Lady Ryders participates in charitable causes that benefit individuals or communities. The group was the winner of 2017 Monroe County VA award.

You may reach Lady Ryders via at:
DistinctiveLadyRyders@yahoo.com
DistinctiveLadyRydersmc.org



Making Business Sense



Dr. Neva Alexander

Conditions that hinder business communication

Communication is an essential attribute of an organization. We spend our time either receiving or requesting information. Lack of communication creates tension and demolishes both personal and organizational relationships. The ability to exchange information or conversation with others is essential to the success of the individual, family or organization. Communication can be hindered when a person cannot make sense of a message. This could be due to a number of circumstances such as language barrier, defensiveness, inarticulateness, poor writing skills and interpersonal skills.

In New York the staffs of most organizations are very diverse. Although this is a great asset to an organization, at times

you will come across an individual that knows English as a second language. Sometimes these workers may be leaders in the organization. This may cause miscommunication and misunderstanding, which may result in staff members or leaders becoming defensive. When one is defensive it becomes difficult for them to be articulate.

In addition, poor writing skills can hinder the communication process. In today's society, we spend a great deal of time sending text messages. As a professor, I noticed that sometimes my students use some abbreviation to communicate in class. Using abbreviation at times can stop the flow of communication on a professional level. Some leaders lack interpersonal skills, thus causing them to be unapproachable. Staff members may avoid communicating with these leaders in fear that they may not have a positive result.

Individuals bring to organizations set of characteristics that influence how information is processed. Organizational com-

munication contributes to creating relationships and assists both individuals and organizations in achieving diverse purpose. Effective communication is best achieved when the idea of the message is clear and the subordinate ideas effectively identify and relate to the main purpose in a naturally convincing manner. Some solutions to lessen the impact due to the hindering of communication includes having face to face meetings with your employees, documenting your conversation by all staff members, and being approachable. Effective communication is necessary for an organization's development. Any hindrance can prevent an organization's growth, and therefore it should be eliminated.

—Dr. Neva Helena Alexander, an educator and motivational speaker, and author, is Founder/ President of Neva Global Alliance. Dr. Alexander can be reached at E: admin@nevaalexander.com

How to Start Your Own Business

First Engage In Side Hustle!

My advice is that before you resign your job to begin your entrepreneurial journey, try to operate your business as a side hustle until it can well generate your monthly income or at least something close to it. Instead of taking a second or third job, you should dedicate time to researching and developing the concept or idea for your business properly. If you need to go to school or get trained, use this time to do it. When you carry out your side hustle to a point where you feel you now have a good grasp of the business idea, or you are generating substantial income or at least have all the necessary tools needed for successful business, and when you know you can no longer handle the pressure of the two jobs, you can then let go of your salary job to focus fully on your business endeavors.

For example, I operated my businesses as a side hustle between 2010 to March 2014, before I actually decided to pursue it full time. Was it easy for me operating a business alongside a full time job as well as family and other commitments? Of course, it wasn't easy at all, but

the passion to succeed, fulfill my destiny and also break out of the monotonous mundane life of being an employee was just too much drive for me to notice the temporary inconvenience. I sensed it strongly in my spirit when it was time to move on to doing my business full time. After discussing the decision with my wife, we both agreed to do it and my life has never been the same again.

Discover What God Has Called You to Do

For most people, what God has called them to do is wrapped up in what they already like to do. Go back through your childhood and reflect on the things you were interested in before you became entangled with life. Find the things that came or come easy and natural to you. The intersection of what you like to do and what comes natural for you to do is what you are called to do. The problem is

that most people know what this is, but they put it aside because someone has told them they couldn't make money doing it. Knowing fully well that our society do not celebrate mediocrity and average, I believe you will excel doing what you like and what comes natural because you will do it better than anyone else on the planet.

Get Employed In the Areas of Your Callings

Rather than making a choice of employment based solely on financial or monetary gains, you should rather consider skill development, experience, exposure, contacts and expertise in the area of your interest. The best way to do this is by working, interning or volunteering for someone or a company that is already doing it at a high level. If this happens to be a low paying job compared to your

worth, let it not bother you because you will not be tempted to stay there your entire life. I was able to walk away from my regular 9-5 job without too much headache simply because the pay was not too impressive. I personally know many people who have been trapped at their job for years and find it difficult to leave to answer the call of entrepreneurship simply because of the attractive salary.

Create another Job for Yourself While Working

While you are working for someone else on a low paying job developing your skills, you should begin the process of creating additional income based on those skills. For example, I have volunteered or work at some projects mainly just to acquire the needed skills. At such times, I have developed my skills on the side as an Event Producer and Event Marketing Consultant. 90 percent of what I am doing today was laid out while working 5-9 job.

—Gbenga Omotayo @MeetGbenga
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Gbenga Omotayo is passionate about helping people develop their God-Inspired business in the areas of Events Marketing, Marketing communications & Business Networking!

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Phil's Perspectives



By Phil Andrews

Financial management for African-Americans must be centered on goals. What gets measured in life gets done. a goal is not a goal until it is set and a plan gets underway for its achievement. Time

is one of our greatest allies along with faith in God. Now is the best time to start your financial goals. The first goal should be to become financially literate. Knowledge is power. The old saying reinforces this concept, "a fool and his money are soon parted."

The first ritual of wealth is to set a goal of pay yourself first, no matter how small the amount. Financial success is as much about discipline, character, and integrity as it is about large sums of money. In the financial world, small advantages have a way of adding up. How much value would you put on a sound financial education?

In the book Rich Dad Poor Dad, it is taught that we much acquire education, experience, and then we will acquire excessive cash.

Each of us has different goals, and our financial plan should cater to those goals. We should develop a healthy passion for financial goal we set which should be reinforced by our daily actions. Tithing, saving, and investing can be a ritual in our

lives. A sense of stewardship over our resources is the highest way of dealing our God-given blessings.

Financial goal-setting requires that we give a good accounting of our cash flow. The age-old adage that "As a man thinketh so shall he be" all that he achieves or fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thinking.

The cry of all humanity should be higher yet. How many individuals in our community know the power of compound interest, but does that number equate to that number that follow its principles?

Financial goal setting requires that we develop a philosophy of success and achievement.

A millionaire once said that "Everyday that I find a penny, it is one day that I do not have to work for it."

Do you value the pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars that flow through your hands? The rich gets richer because respect of the money attracts more money. If you need verification of this fact, just analyze the mentality of a spender verses an investor.

The investor say don't spend your last dollar until you know where your next one is coming from, the spender spends everything and then looks around for money.

The richest man in "Babylon goal" was to keep a part of all the money he made. Saving a part of all the money you make is said to be a secret because so few people follow its principles but profess to know its premise.

Knowing and doing are opposite sides of the coin, but real financial power is gained through action. Remember it's not what you make, it's what you keep. It's not what you know, it's what you do. It is not what you are, it is what you become, what you become will determine what you make. Winners are not born, they are made. The top 3% of all financially successful people are goal setters. A financial plan and goal are the roadmap for an upwardly mobile African-American community.

Remember, time is one of your greatest allies. A journey of a thousand mile begins with one step. May you reach all of your financial, mental, physical, and spiritual goals with God speed. Let's do it!

Phil Andrews is President of Power Networking Business Seminar Series Group; also President of the Long Island African-American Chamber of Commerce.

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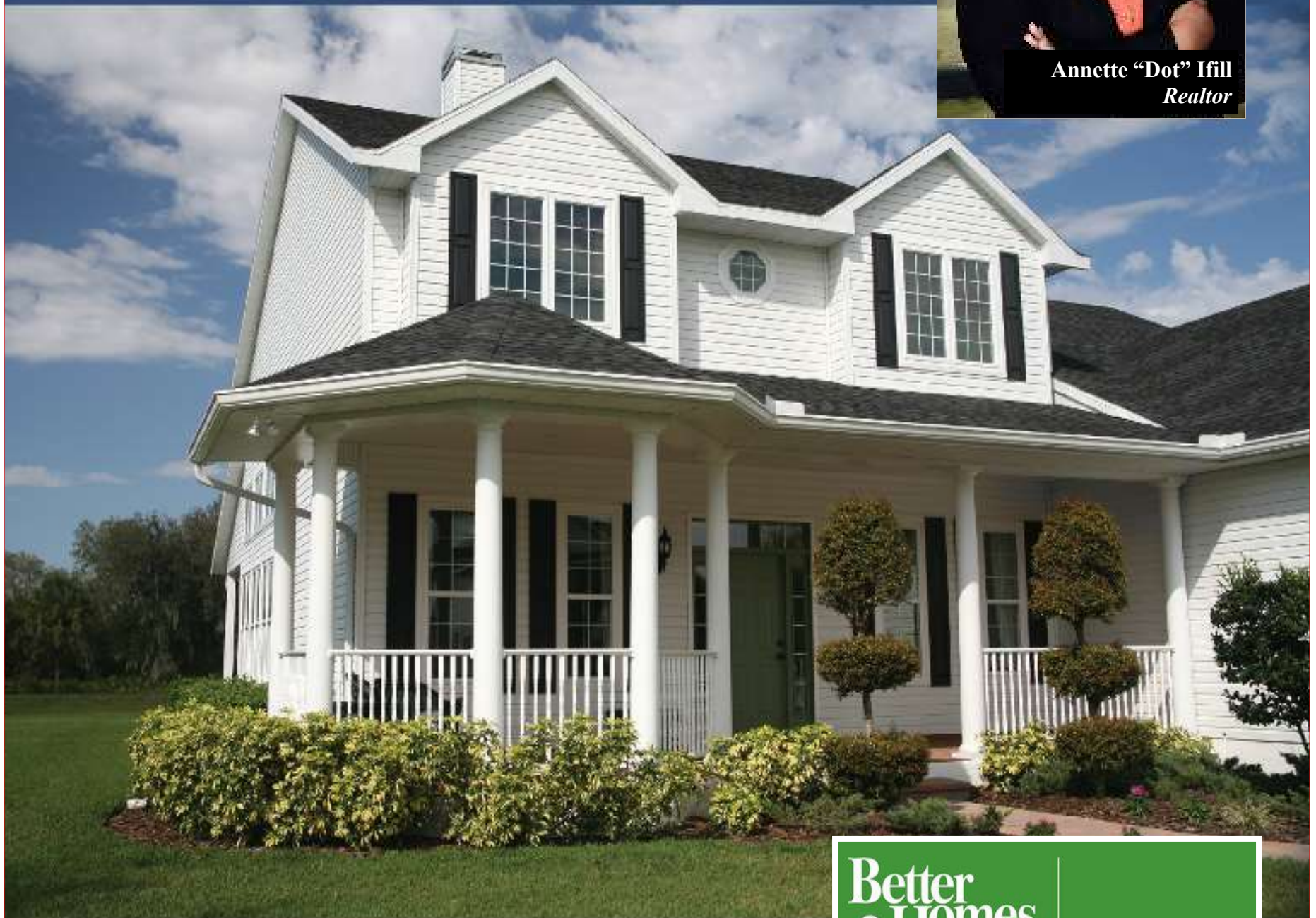
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