



WOMEN INNOVATORS

IN OUR REGION 2025

FIERCE.

TENACIOUS.

RESILIENT.

18
SEP



Wf Westfair
Business Journal

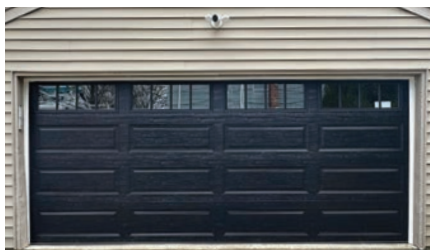
events.westfaironline.com/WOMEN-INNOVATORS-2025



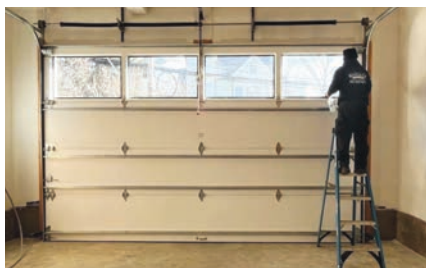
WHITAKER'S

• GARAGE DOOR STORE •

Keeping your doors on track since 1955



QUALITY INSTALLATION



RELIABLE REPAIRS/SERVICES

Custom-built Doors • Door Openers

High Lift Conversions for Car Lifts

Let our family take care of your family!

SCAN TO VISIT
OUR WEBSITE



Visit Our Showroom: 1612 Main St, Peekskill NY
914-962-9873 • www.whitakersgaragedoorstore.com

WELCOME

Welcome to Westfair Business Journal's 2025 Women Innovators.

We're celebrating the amazing women who are leading the way, making positive changes, and shattering glass ceilings in every industry.

These unstoppable women are making history, and are redefining what's possible with their creativity and passion. Women have always been pioneers in science, tech, arts, and more, helping shape what's to come. Today, we're proud to honor that legacy and spotlight these inspiring women.

PROGRAM

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.: Cocktail hour

Beer & Wine • Passed Hors-d'Oeuvres • Networking
Vendor tables

6:30 – 8 p.m.: Awards ceremony

Opening Remarks

Natalie Holland, *Event Director*,
Westfair Business Journal

Guest Speakers

Lauren Azizian, *Senior Vice President, Market Executive
of Business Banking*, Bank of America

Cara Pensabene, MD., *Global Medical Director*, Mastercard
Westchester & Fairfield Board of Director, American Heart Association

Mistress of Ceremonies

Christina Dufour, *Corporate Wellness Consultant and Executive Coach*,
Carnelian Connection

PRESENTED BY



2025 WOMEN INNOVATOR HONOREE

MICHELLE

A. Nicholas

We proudly celebrate **Michelle A. Nicholas** for her outstanding leadership and commitment to strengthening our community.

Michelle has been a valued partner to **Feeding Westchester**, offering mentorship and professional development support that has helped our team grow stronger and serve more effectively. Her ability to connect people and inspire collaboration reflects the very heart of our mission—bringing hope, resources, and opportunity to those who need it most.

Thank you, Michelle, for your vision, passion, and dedication.



THIS PRIVATE BANKER doesn't work banker's hours.

Carla Alfieri works all hours delivering old-fashioned service with cutting-edge technology.

With great pride, we salute you, Carla. Congratulations.

ORANGE
Wealth Management
Private Banking



THANK YOU

PARTNERING SPONSORS

BANK OF AMERICA 

WHITAKER'S
• GARAGE DOOR STORE •
Keeping your doors on track since 1955

SUPPORTERS

ACTION
 ENTERTAINMENT

The **Bristol**
 ASSISTED LIVING


 CASA DE ORNAMENTAL CARVINGS

CUDDY
+FEDER
 LLP


 Fairfield County Bank

Hang
 Notes

Yonkers **DA**
 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

YEDC
 Yonkers Economic Development Corporation

EST. 2002
LET'S PLAY MAHJONG
 A PARTY WITHOUT

mary
belle
 BOOKS


POLE POSITION
 DANCE STUDIO™

Rise 
 PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT
 Powered by Ameriprise Financial

SAQIMA ART


SHARK
 CREATIVE


SPLENDID
 SKIN & AESTHETICS


SUPPORT
CONNECTION
 Breast & Ovarian Cancer Support


 Tell a Therapist

Truffles by Day
 SWEETENED BY DAY
 THEATRE BY DAY



Wartburg



2025 Woman Westfair Innovator Business Journal

Congratulations

Minerva Martinez for
your commitment to
Making Home Happen
for countless families
throughout Connecticut.



For 35 years, CHP has made it their mission to serve seniors, veterans, individuals, and families in need of safe, stable, housing that is affordable. Minerva's leadership, dedication, and passion help drive the organization's success in nonprofit housing development.

Minerva Martinez

VP of Operations
Connecticut Housing Partners



CTHousingPartners.org



@CTHousingPartners



CARA PENSABENE, MD
GLOBAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR
MASTERCARD

WESTCHESTER & FAIRFIELD BOARD OF DIRECTOR
AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

Dr. Cara Pensabene is Mastercard's global medical director, serving as the organization's primary medical advisor and supporting employee health and well-being. She has more than 10 years of clinical experience in internal medicine, primary care, and telemedicine. Dr. Pensabene also has corporate leadership experience in prevention, women's health, lifestyle medicine, mental well-being, and occupational health. She is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and serves on the board of directors for the American Heart Association Eastern States Region. She earned her MD from Stony Brook University School of Medicine and completed her internal medicine residency at SUNY Stony Brook University Medical Center. Dr. Pensabene lives in Westchester County with her husband and three young children.



**Mayor Mike Spano and
the City of Yonkers**

CONGRATULATE

SUE GERRY

Deputy Mayor

ON BEING NAMED AMONG THE

**2025 Women Innovators
In Our Region**

by Westfair Business Journal

CITY OF
YONKERS

YonkersNY.gov



Westchester

New York City

Hudson Valley

Connecticut



Proudly providing legal
services since 1971.

**Congratulations to the 2025
Women Innovators Honorees!**

Cuddy & Feder proudly supports Westfair Business Journal's 2025 Women Innovators. We celebrate the incredible achievements of this year's honorees, whose leadership and innovation are transforming industries and inspiring the next generation of trailblazers.

T 914 761 1300 | F 914 761 5372
cuddyfeder.com

**CHRISTINA DUFOUR**

CORPORATE WELLNESS CONSULTANT & EXECUTIVE COACH
CARNELIAN CONNECTION

Christina Dufour began her career in banking and business development, where performance was measured in numbers, not well-being. With a degree in business management and organization and years of experience, she saw how stress, burnout, and communication issues quietly eroded even the most driven teams and capable leaders. Motivated by the question of how to help people truly thrive at work, Dufour turned to mindfulness and performance science. Over the past 15 years, she has earned multiple certifications in mind-body energy modalities, including a university-backed certification in mindfulness and performance, and studied with renowned teachers to bridge leadership effectiveness and human sustainability. In 2015, she launched CarnelianConnection.com, combining her business expertise with well-being strategies to help organizations support their people more effectively. Her programs are research-backed, results-driven, and designed to address real stressors in practical, business-relevant ways. One of her signature courses was studied by Columbia University, published in a peer-reviewed journal, and shown to reduce stress, decrease depression and anxiety, increase job satisfaction, and lower turnover intentions. Dufour partners with Fortune 500 companies, high-growth teams, and senior leaders to foster cultures where well-being and performance reinforce each other. Through leadership coaching, keynote speaking, and corporate wellness programs, she aims to set a new standard—grounded, measurable, and deeply human. She also works closely with executives and leaders through tailored coaching programs that enhance presence, communication, and strategic self-mastery. Her work helps leaders reduce burnout, improve decision-making, and lead with clarity and confidence—whether in the boardroom, on stage, or within fast-moving teams. Dufour has spoken at the World Business Forum and her work has been featured in The Muse and the Meditation Studio app. She received the Westfair Business Journal Milli Award for outstanding entrepreneurship in 2015 and was named to the 40 Under 40 list for business leadership in 2024.

FINISH Q4 STRONG. LEAD 2026 READY.

The reset you've been waiting for. A tailored experience for leaders or teams who want clarity, capacity, and readiness to finish the year strong.

Q4 Reset Experiences That Adapt to What You Need Most:

At Carnelian Connection, we help leaders and organizations build the systems that fuel performance — starting with energy. The format flexes. The outcome stays the same: readiness, alignment, and results.

- One-on-one coaching for clarity and energy or presentation skills
- Team experiences to strengthen alignment
- Leadership sessions that reset patterns and expand capacity



carnelianconnection.com

Ready for Your Reset?



American
Heart
Association.

American Heart Association.



Westchester Fairfield
**GO RED
FOR WOMEN
EXPERIENCE**

Women motivate each other. Educate each other. Support each other. Inspire each other.
Let's Go Red together to be seen, to be counted, to be heard, to make an impact.

Join us March 2026 for our annual Go Red for Women Experience



Carla Alfieri
SVP, Director of private banking
Orange Bank & Trust Company

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I'd say I've stayed true to who I am. I've led with heart, built trust through relationships and done my best to put people first. I never set out to climb the corporate ladder, I just wanted to help families and do the right thing. The rest followed.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

Taking on the creation of the Private Banking department in 2017 was a huge leap for me. I had no background in it and honestly I was figuring it out as I went. It taught me that courage isn't about having all the answers, it's about showing up, listening and learning fast. That risk ended up being one of the most rewarding chapters of my career.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I hope my journey shows other women that you don't need a perfect plan to make an impact. You just need heart, hard work and the courage to raise your hand when something needs to get done. If I've helped open a door or encouraged someone to trust themselves more, then that's a legacy I'm proud of.



Thamara Barbosa-Tirri
Regional vice president of operations
The Bristol Assisted Living, Ultimate Care

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

Career: I've built a career through determination, resilience and a genuine passion for what I do. I don't just meet expectations I raise the bar and I've earned every success with integrity and hard work. Personal Life: In my personal life, I've grown into someone who shows up fully, for myself and for others. I nurture meaningful relationships, value personal growth and live with purpose and authenticity.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I've ever taken in my career was leaving a space where I was comfortable and well-established to enter an entirely new industry. I had built a solid reputation and knew the terrain well, but something in me craved challenge, growth and a broader impact. That move taught me the power of reinvention. It reminded me that while experience is valuable, adaptability and the willingness to start fresh are what truly define resilience. Stepping into the unknown expanded not just my skills but also my confidence in navigating unfamiliar territory.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

One of the most defining moments in my journey was when a project I led didn't hit the mark. The feedback was direct and while it stung, I took it to heart. I don't like to be told twice; once I recognize a gap, I move fast to close it. That setback lit a fire in me. I doubled down, refined my approach and held myself to an even higher standard. It taught me that failure isn't the end -- it's just a signal to sharpen up and level up. I strive for excellence, and every misstep pushes me to raise the bar, not just for myself, but for everything I'm part of.



www.LetsPlayMahjong.com

Private Parties ~ Fun Workshops
 info@letsplaymahjong.com
 Elva Grosman 516-851-5848

EST. 2024
LET'S PLAY MAHJONG
 A PARTY SERVICE

SCAN HERE
 TO GET ON OUR LIST
 OR BOOK A PARTY!



mary belle
 BOOKS

contemporary romance
 women's fiction
 children's books



scan the qr code for
 my italian-american
 love stories and
 marvelous marina
 kid's series!





WWW.MARYBELLEBOOKS.COM | @MARY.BELLE.BOOKS





Peggy Boyce
Founder, executive producer
Ladies of Laughter

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

Congratulations, Peggy. You never give up. You always keep moving forward by continuing to amplify women's comedic voices while helping jumpstart their comedy careers. Congratulations on being a force for women in comedy for over 25 years.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I have taken was to start my own company Ladies of Laughter Inc. I never thought I could do that. I come from a place and time where you got "a job" and worked for others. After bringing my idea to other companies, I realized that they would be profiting from my idea in a major way and I wouldn't. Once I realized that I could actually sell my idea to a major sponsor, theaters, clubs, casinos and colleges, well then, I knew I had to do it. This taught me that you can do anything – you just need the passion and desire to do it.

When has failure fueled your fire and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

It became very challenging after 9/11. Our major nation sponsor pulled out of sponsorship, and I was back to square one. It took me a few years, but I never stopped believing that I could bring it back. I brought it back with a national tour and it's been successfully appearing at theaters across America since 2012. I did this by always keeping it "going" even when I had to go back to corporate America.



Rose Cappa Rotunno
Vice president institutional advancement
Wartburg

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I'd say, "You're a connector – of people, purpose and possibility." I have a gift for seeing both the big picture and the small details that make people feel seen, heard and valued. Whether it's launching an initiative like the Westchester Women's Summit, creating a transformational donor experience, or advocating for someone who needs a voice, I show up with purpose, passion, and persistence. I also think I am quite creative.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

Starting my own event company after decades in nonprofit fundraising was a leap of faith -- not just in my skillset, but in myself. It taught me that stepping into leadership means owning both uncertainty and opportunity. That risk opened doors I never imagined – from producing large-scale events and campaigns to helping organizations find new ways to engage and grow. It reminded me that boldness and belief go hand in hand.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I hope my work helps create a ripple effect where women of all ages feel empowered to lead with authenticity, vision and heart. Whether mentoring young professionals, championing caregivers or spotlighting trailblazers through the Women's Summit, I want to help future leaders see that their stories matter and that leadership doesn't have to look one way to be powerful. We've seen what happens when women lead movements. Now it's time to design systems that reflect those values at every level.



BITE INTO A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE!



ON HOLD

A Better Phone Call Experience

PODCASTING



OVERHEAD

Business Branded Announcements

@SHARCCREATIVE

866-SHARC-99

SHARCCREATIVE.COM

WESTCHESTERTALKRADIO.COM



Shynae Davis

CEO and owner

Honey Notes Affirmation & Candle Bar

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I'm proud of how far I've come. Even when I've felt overwhelmed or unseen, I kept going. I create beauty from chaos, lead with heart and pour love into everything I touch. I am becoming the version of me I used to dream about and, I'm just getting started.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I've ever taken in my career was launching Honey Notes Affirmation and Candle Bar while still working a demanding full-time job at Pace University and raising two children. I didn't wait until conditions were perfect. I turned my affirmations into products. My candles into community. I took the risk of betting on myself and I built something that didn't exist before I "dreamed" it up.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

Failure has fueled my fire by reminding me that rejection is often redirection. After hosting my first candle class in a garage with just three attendees, I was denied the lease for my dream commercial space, but I didn't give up. That "no" led to a series of divine redirections, ultimately guiding me to open and expand Honey Notes Affirmation and Candle Bar into a full-scale wellness space, proving that setbacks can be sacred steps toward something greater.



Jenny Delorbe

Clinical billing liaison, adjunct professor

**Yale University, Sacred Heart University,
College of Westchester**

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

If I could give myself a compliment, I'd say I'm remarkably resilient and adaptable. I'm proud of how I've navigated challenging situations, always finding creative solutions and learning from setbacks. I have a natural ability to connect with others and lead with empathy, which helps me build strong, collaborative teams. I'm committed to continuous growth personally, academically and professionally, evidenced by pursuing advanced degrees and new opportunities. Most of all, I'm not afraid to show up authentically and encourage others to do the same.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

Failure and setbacks have fueled my growth. When I was overlooked for a promotion, I used it as motivation to seek feedback, pursue my MBA, and now complete my doctorate. Each obstacle helped clarify my goals and build new skills, leading to better opportunities. I've learned to see failure as redirection, making me more resilient and resourceful. Now, I encourage others to treat setbacks as launch pads for their own comebacks.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

Reflecting on my work, I hope to open doors and make things easier for women behind me, whether in the classroom, boardroom, or everyday moments. My path hasn't been straight—I've made mistakes and felt like an imposter—but each leadership moment, each advocacy for equity, is a message: you belong here, and your voice matters. I aim to challenge outdated ideas about leadership and ensure future generations, especially first-generation women, women of color, and those who don't fit the traditional mold, see themselves as valued and empowered.



PROSPECTOR POPCORN

JOBS. SPARKLE. POPCORN.



www.ProspectorPopcorn.org



Congratulations, Private Wealth Advisor Geri Eisenman Pell, CFP®, MBA, CDA® on the well-deserved honor of being named one of Westfair Business Journal's **2025 Women Innovators!**

Thank you for inspiring us everyday – your transformative belief that when done well, wealth management and financial planning can be a healing modality, has had a lasting impact on so many lives.



Rise Private Wealth Management,
a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

800 Westchester Avenue, Suite 300
Rye Brook, New York 10573
914.253.8800
geri.e.pell@ampf.com

The Churchill
300 East 40th Street, Suite 28R
New York, New York 10016

Powered by Ameriprise
Financial

Westfair Business Journal Women Innovators is awarded using information provided on questionnaires submitted by applicants or nominees and not independently verified. Awards are the sole opinion of Westfair Business Journal and are not indicative of future performance or representative of any one client's experience. Investment performance is not a criterion. Past performance is not an indication of future results. **Not FDIC or NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value** Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Securities offered by Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2025 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



Geri Eisenman Pell

Private Wealth Advisor, Co-Founder

Rise Private Wealth Management a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

Nearly 40 years ago, I started my own financial planning and wealth management firm. Back then, the industry was male-dominated and felt rigid and unwelcoming. I believed that connection mattered most and saw financial planning as a healing tool. I created a spa-like office where clients could feel relaxed, especially resonating with women. This experience taught me the importance of staying true to myself, even when I felt alone in my approach.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

Before starting my own business, I spent seven years in corporate finance and realized I didn't thrive in a corporate structure. I wanted to build a company where I could innovate, lead, and create a culture I believed in. Nearly 40 years later, I've built a thriving team of over 90 professionals managing \$4.5 billion in assets, helping people reach their financial goals. I'm also honored to be a Barron's Top 100 Women, a Forbes Top Women Advisor, and one of Crain's 2025 Notable Leaders in Finance.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I have had the great honor of mentoring and training many women in the financial services industry. Though women still only make up about a quarter of Certified Financial Planners, I am proud to be an advocate for women choosing this career path as they find their value and unique ability to relate to clients on a more personal level. Helping to develop and shape the next generation of leaders is a privilege I take very seriously. I am proud to have the opportunity to help the next generation learn to lead with empathy for a brighter, more collaborative future.



Susan Gerry

Deputy Mayor

City of Yonkers

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

It's never easy to talk about your own talents. Careerwise, I would say that I've grown to be fluent in government operations and that I gravitate toward large-scale problem-solving. The bigger the challenge, the more I'm interested. As a results-oriented leader, I am driven by a strong work ethic and a commitment to collaborative teamwork.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

Being the first female Deputy Mayor of the city of Yonkers has been one of the most rewarding, yet unanticipated roles I've played in my current position. In this capacity, I try to focus on subtle leadership skills: leading by example, fostering self-awareness and encouraging and empowering the women around me, from members of our workforce to the students in our public schools. I hope their takeaway from working with all of the strong female leaders in Mayor Mike Spano's administration is that it doesn't matter where you came from or how you start, 90% of their success is going to be just showing up and doing the work.

In your view, what's the next big opportunity for women to lead and innovate?

I have an amazing daughter who is about to start her college experience in a few weeks. One of my favorite pieces of advice for her is: don't let where you are today define where you can go tomorrow. Almost none of the women I know envisioned the careers that we have today when we were just starting out. I think innovation comes from within: raising your hand for that assignment no one is expecting you to volunteer for, saying yes when someone of influence sees something in you even if you don't see it yourself and refusing to impose limits on yourself or your career.



Congratulations to our
Regional Vice President of Operations

Thamara Barbosa-Tirri

for being named one of the
2025 Women Innovators
by Westfair Business Journal.

thebristol.com



Support Connection's 31st Annual Support-A-Walk For Breast & Ovarian Cancer



For Breast & Ovarian Cancer

SUNDAY 10.5.25 | *Walking Together
to Make Lives Better*
supportconnection.org



SUNDAY OCTOBER 5, 2025

**FDR PARK - PARKING LOT 1
YORKTOWN HEIGHTS, NY**



Pre-Walk Activities at 9 AM

Walk Starts at 10 AM

Scan Here to Learn More!



Questions? Email Walk@supportconnection.org or Call 914-962-6402



Sheryl Hatwood

Owner and founder

TRUCE by SH, LLC and S.H.E.

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

Thank you for the lessons and thank you for showing up every day not only for yourself but to continue to share your resilience. In your vulnerability you found strength and able to share seeds of compassion, and empathy refusing to let life's obstacles silo you but to expand you. You are a woman of strength, of purpose and of worth.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I took was writing and performing an Off-Broadway play about my life and traumas. I had no theater experience and faced potential family fallout, but I broke my family's privacy rules. It was terrifying, with no blueprint or guarantee of success—yet it sold out. This experience opened doors for me as an author, speaker, and entrepreneur with my product line, TRUCE, focused on self-advocacy. Stepping out in faith taught me not to let fear hold me back and showed how my voice can silence shame.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

I'm not sure I ever understood failure as simply missing the mark or not achieving a goal. For me, every setback carried a lesson and I saw it as a redirection to pivot and rethink or rework and idea. Each setback became a teacher and an opportunity for growth. This is what I had to learn to build, and the rebound time has lessened. This is the muscle I had to build learning to rebound time. And over time, the space between setback and comeback has only grown shorter.



Julie Kushner

State Senator

Connecticut General Assembly

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I am tenacious. I have a vision of a more equitable society, and I have been dedicated to this goal for nearly five decades. Along the way, I have been part of making history – from organizing secretaries for better wages and working conditions to building the CT Paid Leave program, helping more than 200,000 working families in Connecticut. I never give up, even when obstacles loom large.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

After 42 years with the United Auto Workers as a member, organizer, and regional director, I chose a new challenge—running for political office at age 66. No woman had ever been director in our region or represented the 24th District in the state Senate. Despite the risk and lack of experience, I worked hard and found my life skills prepared me well. I've learned it's never too late to take on a new challenge.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

My work organizing women workers into the union empowered women to not only improve their conditions in the workplace but also encouraged women to step up and become leaders at work and in their community. In my very first term as a state senator, I led the passage of the CT Paid Leave program and the \$15 minimum wage – legislation which impacts hundreds of thousands of women workers and their families. These programs will sustain women workers now and for generations to come. Throughout my career, I have worked with others to improve women's wages, to improve access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education. While there is still much to be done, the progress we have made will impact women for generations to come.

Celebrating the 2025 Women Innovators

Congratulations, Virginia!



Fairfield County Bank®

We Are Fairfield County

203.431.7431 • FairfieldCountyBank.com

Leading with heart.
Innovating with purpose.

Wartburg proudly congratulates our
Vice President for Institutional
Advancement

Rose Cappa Rotunno

2025 WOMEN INNOVATORS HONOREE

Her vision, leadership, and commitment
to empowering women and building
vibrant communities for older adults
embody Wartburg's mission to nurture
mind, body, and spirit through innovation
and compassionate care.

wartburg.org



Wartburg





Minerva Martinez
Sr. VP of Operations
 CT Housing Partners

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I ever took was saying "yes" to leadership opportunities before I felt fully ready. I began my career as an administrative assistant and with each new role from recertification specialist to property manager and eventually senior vice president of operations, I embraced every promotion as a challenge to grow. Each step pushed me out of my comfort zone, and I quickly learned that confidence is built through action, not perfection. That mindset has shaped the leader I am today, one who believes in leaning into growth, taking risks and empowering others to rise before they think they're ready.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

Early in my career, I made a mistake on a compliance file that could've jeopardized funding. I took full accountability and worked hard to correct it, learning every detail of the regulations so it wouldn't happen again. That moment sparked my commitment to mastering the technical side of affordable housing and mentoring others to avoid the same pitfalls. What felt like a failure became one of my strongest assets.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I hope my journey shows other women that leadership doesn't require a perfect start it requires persistence, work ethic and heart. I believe in reaching back and pulling others up, just as mentors did for me. Through my work in affordable housing, I aim to create not just stable homes but a culture where women at every level are seen, supported and empowered to lead.



Lata McGinn
Co-Founder and Co-Director
 Cognitive & Behavioral Consultants

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

In the 1990s, I took a bold risk by co-founding Cognitive & Behavioral Consultants (CBC), a mental health practice specializing in evidence-based therapies like CBT and DBT in New York. At the time, such specialization was rare, with only a few centers in the tri-state area. Over 20 years, CBC has grown from one employee to over 50 clinicians serving individuals, families, and organizations with a wide range of mental health concerns. This experience taught me that taking risks can turn your vision into purpose and achievement, giving you the strength to work hard and succeed.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

The biggest failure I had was in my late twenties, when my full-time job that I had secured right after I completed my doctoral studies and received my Ph.D., was switched to a part-time position and could soon be eliminated. I had no power and no other prospects given that I was being sponsored for my green card. I knew I had no choice but to succeed. I found a new mentor who believed in me, worked hard to prove myself and eventually became a director. However, that lesson sparked the vision of creating an organization that would share my values. This eventually became Cognitive and Behavioral Consultants (CBCT), so I am thankful to have experienced failure early in my life.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

Early in my career, I promised to support women and help them lift others as they chart their own paths. So far, I've trained over 200 clinicians, many of whom have become leaders. I believe the seeds we've planted will continue to grow, empowering future women leaders to expand the reach of evidence-based care for generations to come.

YONKERS IDA AND MAYOR MIKE SPANO

proudly support

Westfair Business Journal's 2025 Women Innovators Event

and congratulate honoree

Deputy Mayor Susan Gerry



YEDC
Yonkers Economic Development Corporation



Yonkers Industrial Development Agency, 470 Nepperhan Avenue, Suite 200, Yonkers, NY 10701

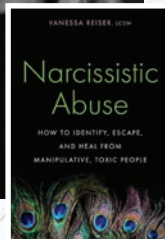
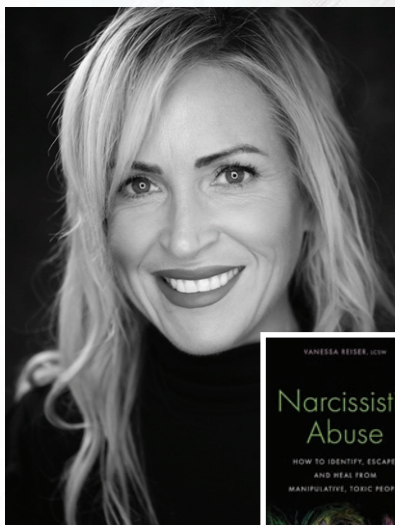
Tell a Therapist



Inhale love, Exhale fear

Struggling with narcissistic abuse?

Vanessa's story is powerful—her childhood trauma, surviving a manipulative relationship, and her journey to healing. As a psychotherapist, Vanessa now helps victims understand narcissistic abuse, rebuild their self-esteem, and reclaim their power. If you've been victimized, you're not alone. We believe you. At Tell a Therapist, we're here to support your healing every step of the way.



telltatherapist.net | Vanessa@telltatherapist.net



Stacia M. Morris, MBA, CAGS

Founder and CEO

TireMIS Solutions, LLC, dba Your Life TREK

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

If I were to compliment myself, I would say I've come full circle and am living my best life. I've been blessed with supportive parents, grounding siblings, and great friends. I've used my talents as a speaker, educator, author, and leadership coach, while also giving back through volunteer work. Recently, that work has helped empower an underserved community. I started life in a small country and have taken my gifts to make a global impact. Look at me!

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

My boldest career risk was leaving my teaching job in St. Vincent and the Bahamas to pursue an MBA in the U.S., during a recession. Despite naysayers, I took a leap of faith, switching to a fast-track MBA in computer information systems and landing a job at IBM. While working full-time, I earned a post-MBA certificate in accounting, which helped build my successful corporate career. This experience taught me to follow my dreams and live by faith, leaving behind comfort to pursue growth and opportunity.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I envision my work affecting future generations of women leaders mainly by encouraging them not to put themselves in a box, to be themselves. It is very easy to live by the way in which you are categorized. People slot you first, then believe that it is easy to deal with you. I spent years in corporate America – a black, highly educated woman, who spoke funny (British Caribbean accent) and who did not fit into a box and was continually challenged and challenging. I mentor and encourage women leaders to find their passion and their purpose, be continuous learners, be volunteers; then be boldly and loudly themselves. I tell my story to motivate and encourage, 'BE BRAVE, BE YOU.'



Michelle A. Nicholas

Founder and CEO

The NICO Consulting

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

In 2023, I left a six-figure SVP role as chief diversity and community officer to fully focus on The NICO Consulting, which I had been running on the side. Despite doubts, I knew my proven solutions could transform organizations at scale. This leap taught me that calculated risks stem from trusting your passion and track record. Today, my firm specializes in culture transformation, future-of-work strategy, and organizational development for mission-driven nonprofits and corporations worldwide—showing that sometimes, the biggest risk is not fully committing to where your greatest impact lies.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I'm building organizational infrastructure so the next generation won't have to start from scratch. Through my consulting work in culture transformation and nonprofit development, I embed inclusive innovation and belonging into enterprise systems. I also co-lead international initiatives creating pathways for women leaders. My goal is that in 20 years, young women worldwide will see data-driven culture and human-centered workplaces as standard, not revolutionary.

In your view, what's the next big opportunity for women to lead and innovate?

Women are poised to lead the next wave of innovation by blending organizational agility with stakeholder impact. Their collaborative leadership style and ability to navigate complexity make them ideal for guiding this change. My experience shows that women-led approaches to embedding belonging drive measurable impact and sustainable growth. Organizations that embrace this integrated approach will succeed in the future.

Congratulations to the 2025 Women Innovator honorees!
We are proud to celebrate these trailblazing women who
are redefining leadership, transforming the future of
work across all industries, and driving meaningful
change in our communities.

Chereese Jarvis-Hill
and the Events To Remember + PR To Remember Team
Full Service Event Management & Public Relations
(914) 218-3968 Office
www.EventsRemember.com



Discover the Journey of Saqina Art

A PIECE OF PEACE AND
HARMONY — HANDCRAFTED,
THOUGHTFULLY ASSEMBLED,
AND PAINTED WITH LOVE.
EACH DOT AND DETAIL
RADIATES TRANQUILITY.
FEEL THE CALM — OWN
YOUR UNIQUE MANDALA
ROCK TODAY.

SAQINA ART



@SAQINA.ART





Kristin Okesson

SVP, General Manager

Connoisseur Media CT, Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

If I could compliment myself, I would say that I really care about people –not just the work they do, but who they are. I'm intentional about creating a culture where everyone feels comfortable, valued and supported. I lead with transparency and trust and I believe that the strength of any organization comes from the strength of its people. I'm decisive when I need to be, but always thoughtful and team oriented. There's no ego in how I lead, just a belief that we are a team no matter the result.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

While it may not have been a failure in the traditional sense, I went through a major legal battle that disrupted my work and life. What fueled me through that time was the unwavering support of the company and leaders who stood by me. I was determined to prove I was worth fighting for. That experience lit a fire in me to give back tenfold and now I seek out the people who are worth fighting for. I aim to be the kind of leader they were to me: loyal, supportive and relentlessly committed to helping others rise.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

As a leader, I have the privilege and responsibility to open doors for others, regardless of gender. I can ensure that the best people are given the opportunities they've earned. When that person is a woman, I'm proud to help move the needle forward. I know the power of visibility, so if seeing a woman in my position helps inspire the next generation to lead with confidence, then that impact is meaningful. I aim to lead by example with clarity, fairness and a commitment to developing talent so that more women feel empowered to step up, speak out and shape the future of our industry.



Naheed Quaisar

CEO

Health Products For You

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

Fearless risk-taker. Relentless go-getter. If I set my heart on something, I go after it whether it's scaling a physically demanding mountain or closing a business deal, I believe progress lives just outside your comfort zone. And I've learned that bold moves made with clarity, intent, deep conviction and resilience create the kind of momentum that changes everything.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career and what did it teach you?

We didn't have outside investors. No safety nets. Just a deep belief in what we were building-and a willingness to go all in. Every bit of revenue we earned, we put right back into the business. And it worked. The more we risked, the more we gained. Over seven years, we scaled by 600%. But we weren't prepared for what comes after the high. Post Covid, we hit a wall. Cost of acquisition went up drastically. The systems that worked before no longer held up. We had to face the reality that what got us here wasn't going to get us through. That period taught me something I'll never forget: "Risk is essential but sustainable risk is everything."

In your view, what's the next big opportunity for women to lead and innovate?

I think the next big opportunity is the adoption of AI, which needs empathetic visionaries, collaborative thinkers and system-aware strategists. Women bring all of that and more. By virtue of their being, women often bring strengths such as empathy, intuition, collaboration, systems thinking, nurturing and long-term strategic insight all of which will be very valuable in guiding the thoughtful and ethical adoption of artificial intelligence. These qualities will help ensure AI is developed and implemented in ways that are inclusive, human-centric and socially responsible. Their leadership will be essential not just for adopting AI but for shaping it into a force that serves humanity widely.



Christina Rae

President

Buzz Creators, Inc.

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I would commend myself for how I've managed to balance being a loving wife and mom of three with the demands of a fast-paced career. The PR world is filled with tight deadlines and can easily become all-consuming, so it's essential to know when to pause, reset and prioritize yourself and your family. It hasn't always been easy, but it's been incredibly fulfilling to nurture both aspects of my life. I am proud of how well I've handled the things within my control.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

The boldest risk I've taken in my career was leaving the corporate communications world after 15 years to launch my own PR and marketing firm, Buzz Creators. Walking away from a steady paycheck with two young kids and a mortgage for the uncertainty of entrepreneurship was nerve wracking to say the least. However, 16 years later, Buzz Creators is still thriving. This amazing journey has taught me the power of betting on myself. I genuinely love the hustle and the incredible rewards that come with it.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

Through my work at Buzz Creators, I aim to inspire future generations of women leaders to harness the power of storytelling and explore the possibilities of entrepreneurship. Building Buzz Creators from the ground up has shown me what it truly means to take control of your destiny. I hope that other women see that they, too, can build something of their own, lead with confidence and use storytelling as a powerful tool to spark change and make a lasting impact.



Victoria Sheyko

Marketing Associate

Valitana

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

My boldest risk was joining a fast-paced fintech company without prior industry experience. Leaving a stable environment, I faced rapid learning and constant adaptation. It taught me that growth happens outside your comfort zone, boosting my confidence, highlighting the value of fresh perspectives, and emphasizing curiosity, grit, and strong relationships.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

I hope my work helps pave the way for more women to step into leadership with confidence, authenticity and ambition. By showing up fully, taking initiative and not being afraid to challenge the status quo, I aim to create a visible example that leadership doesn't have to look one way to be effective. Whether it's mentoring others, amplifying diverse voices or simply advocating for more inclusive decision-making, I want the next generation of women leaders to feel empowered to lead on their own terms not by fitting into a mold, but by reshaping it.

In your view, what's the next big opportunity for women to lead and innovate?

The next big opportunity for women to lead lies at the intersection of technology, sustainability, and inclusive design. As the world becomes more connected and socially conscious, women are uniquely positioned to drive empathetic, community-focused innovation. Whether in fintech, climate tech, AI ethics, or equitable workplaces, the chance is to lead with vision and build systems that reflect diversity and long-term impact.



Virginia Turnbull
Senior Vice President, Team Leader
 Fairfield County Bank

If you could compliment yourself, what would you say?

I work well under pressure and can focus to get tasks, even multiple tasks, completed. Whether it's an internal project or underwriting a complicated loan (almost always the night before vacation), I dig deep and put in the necessary effort to complete the task. I come from a long line of hard workers and my work ethic is my superpower.

What is the boldest risk you've ever taken in your career, and what did it teach you?

Very early on in my career I changed jobs often, each time increasing responsibility. During one of my early interviews, a senior banker noted that I "switched banks a lot," implying that it was a negative. I thought at the time that his comment was short-sighted. He was of the mindset that you remain with one, maybe two, employers for your entire career. Rather than defend my job moves, I instead focused on all the skills I learned with each new position. Each of those opportunities made me a more valuable employee. If I had the chance to do it again, I would make all the same job moves. I honed my skills at each of the banks I worked for. I cultivated relationships with employees and clients. I am a better lender today because of those experiences.

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

As a junior lender, I struggled with nerves during presentations, despite being well-prepared. My first talk was technically strong but delivered poorly due to self-consciousness. Determined to improve, I practiced, studied others, and developed my own style. I still get nervous, but I focus on communicating effectively, not perfection.



Marialisa Zywochenko
Owner & president
 Cyrus Contracting Corporation

When has failure fueled your fire, and how did you turn setbacks into your greatest comebacks?

When COVID-19 hit, my company faced overnight shutdowns and uncertain futures. I paused to regroup, using the down-time to streamline operations, improve safety, and invest in training and technology. I also rethought our project focus, emphasizing high-end residential work and stronger client ties. What initially felt like a setback became a chance to reinvent, and we returned leaner, smarter, and stronger.

How do you envision your work impacting future generations of women leaders?

As a female construction company owner in a traditionally male-dominated industry, I see my work as more than just building structures, it's about building a legacy. I hope young women see that leadership in construction, in any field really, is not defined by gender but by vision, grit and integrity. By leading with confidence, compassion and excellence, I hope to open doors and shift mindsets showing future generations of women that they can break ground both literally and figuratively. My goal is to be a visible example that they belong at the table, on the job site and at the head of the company. If even one young woman looks at what I've done and believes she can do it, then I've built something that truly lasts.

In your view, what's the next big opportunity for women to lead and innovate?

The construction industry is evolving with new technologies like 3D modeling, smart tools, and sustainable methods, creating opportunities for women to lead innovation. Women's strengths—clear communication, creative problem-solving, and purpose-driven design—position them as essential leaders. The future of construction belongs to those who dare to lead, and women are more than ready.



CHERESEE JERVIS-HILL

CEO and Founder

**Events To Remember + PR To Remember,
divisions of Events by Chereese, Inc.**

Chereese Jervis-Hill has over two decades of event management and promotion experience, an accomplished event producer and publicist with drive, vision, and fresh ideas. She founded Events To Remember (ETR), in April 2004, a M/WBE full-service virtual and live event management (live, hybrid and virtual) & public relations firm located in Hastings on Hudson, New York, specializing in conceptualizing, organizing, managing, marketing, and publicizing events, experiences and public relations campaigns for corporate, not-for-profits, municipalities, entrepreneurs and agencies to help them tell their story.

Chereese credits her success to the corporate experience gained early on in her career, working for powerhouses like Philip Morris, Deutsche Bank and MetLife. Named Best Event Planner in Westchester County by the readers of Westchester Magazine, Chereese was named one of the Top Women in Business by 914Inc. Magazine, Powerful Women in Westchester County by The Westchester County Business Journal, Westchester's 40 Under 40 Rising Stars and Hall of Fame Chairman's Award by The Business Council of Westchester, and a Leadership Westchester Alum-ni. Chereese is a Certified Farmers Market Manager for the State of New York, and she has re-ceived the following awards: Chairman's Award, Business of the Year, the Spirit of Caring Award, the Spirit of a Woman Empowerment Award, and the Community Women of the Year Award.

Chereese sits on the Executive Board of Directors for the Public Relations Society of America (Westchester/Fairfield Chapter), the Public Relations Society of America is the nation's leading pro-fessional organization serving the communications community. Chereese was raised in the South Bronx, NY and attended Fordham University. She resides in Westchester County with her husband Arnold and their two daughters.



VALERIE JENSEN

Founder and Visionary
The Prospector

Valerie Jensen is an eccentric and innovative visionary dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. Her award-winning work as an entrepreneur, filmmaker, author, advocate, and investor is fueled by her belief in the power of sparkle and a reach-for-the-stars attitude.

Val began her career as an elementary school teacher in 2003. After leaving teaching, she served as executive director of SPHERE, a local arts nonprofit for adults with disabilities. While there, she adapted and directed eight musicals and three feature-length films that featured people with disabilities both behind and in front of the camera, including the must-see "Sparkle Island." Throughout her work, she was nagged by one thing: While the doors to education, transportation, and communication were opened by the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities are still underrepresented and largely absent in the workforce. Val knew most people with disabilities are capable and passionate about work. With this in mind, she set her sights on helping those same people experience the joys of meaningful employment.

In 2012, Val and her team began redesigning the historic Ridgefield Playhouse, transforming it into The Prospector. As founder and visionary, she designed the Prospector's model and building with the mission of meaningful employment in mind.

Val has spread her sparkle across the country, hosting speaking engagements at Dartmouth College, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Columbia University, the University of Texas at Austin, and other institutions. She has been featured on major media outlets—including NBC Nightly News, "Good Morning America," "The Today Show," The New York Times, HuffPost, ESPN, and more. Her groundbreaking work has also been recognized by various branches of government, including the state of Connecticut's Department of Labor and the president of the United States.

Val lives in Connecticut with her three adult children, a golden retriever, two sheep, at least three cats, and 60 chickens.

SUPERLATIVES

Best Early Career Success Story



Peggy Boyce
Founder, Executive Producer
Ladies of Laughter



Kristin Okesson
SVP, General Manager
Connoisseur Media CT

Best Influential Visionary



Victoria Sheyko
Marketing Associate
Valitana



Shynae Davis
CEO and Owner
Honey Notes Affirmation
& Candle Bar

Fashionably Fierce Leader



Virginia Turnbull
*Senior Vice President,
Team Leader*
Fairfield County Bank



Jenny Delorbe
*Clinical Billing Liaison,
Adjunct Professor*
Yale University, Sacred Heart University,
College of Westchester

Leading Champion of Diversity



Michelle A. Nicholas
Founder and CEO
The NICO Consulting



**Thamara
Barbosa-Tirri**
Regional Vice President of Operations
The Bristol Assisted Living,
Ultimate Care

SUPERLATIVES

Most Grounded and Unshakable



Lata McGinn
Co-Founder and Co-Director
Cognitive & Behavioral
Consultants



Christina Rae
President
Buzz Creators, Inc.

Most Likely to Make History



Susan Gerry
Deputy Mayor
City of Yonkers



Rose Cappa Rotunno
*Vice president institutional
advancement*
Wartburg

Most Likely to Shatter Glass Ceilings



Marialisa Zywochenko
Owner and president
Cyrus Contracting
Corporation



Geri Eisenman Pell
Private Wealth Advisor, Co-Founder
Rise Private Wealth Management a private
wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise
Financial Services, LLC

Resilient Community Builder



Julie Kushner
State Senator
Connecticut General
Assembly



Minerva Martinez
Sr. VP of Operations
CT Housing Partners

ENDORSEMENTS

“Thamara, I’ve watched you evolve into the powerhouse you are today-intelligent, driven, and inspiring. You move with purpose and raise others with you.” – *Everton M., Language Access*

“Through laughter and leadership, your passion for discovering and promoting new and diverse comedic talent is exactly what we need in the world.” – *David B., Emelin Theatre*

“You lead with heart, vision, and purpose-turning bold ideas into impact. Honored to work with you. Congrats on this well-deserved recognition!” – *Kerry M., Wartburg*

“Shynae, your fearless entrepreneurship and visionary spirit are redefining what’s possible. You’re building a legacy that inspires us all.” – *Laure Ann S., Party Required, LLC*

“Jenny is an amazing colleague who exemplifies strong, female leadership. She is intelligent, hard-working and steadfast. Congratulations.” – *Michele S., Yale School of Medicine*

“Congratulations, Sue Gerry and the 2025 honorees! Your partnership, passion, and determination have led to positive initiatives for Yonkers.” – *Mayor Mike Spano, City of Yonkers*

“You’ve shown what it means to lead with integrity, purpose, and bold ambition. TY for breaking barriers and setting the bar high for future leaders.” – *Iris M. C., - Connecticut Housing Partners*

“Stacia Morris-visionary leader, inspiring change through innovation, resilience, and trusted leadership that empowers lasting impact.” – *Walter H., SEBA*

“You are a visionary, a fierce warrior of God, a true champion for diversity, and a powerful force for good in the nonprofit world.” – *Juan D., Orange Bank & Trust*

SUPERLATIVES

Ultimate Champion of Change



Sheryl Hatwood
Owner and founder
TRUCE by SH, LLC and S.H.E



Carla Alfieri
SVP, Director of Private Banking
Orange Bank & Trust Company

Unstoppable Powerhouse



Stacia M. Morris,
MBA, CAGS
Founder and CEO
TireMIS Solutions, LLC,
dba Your Life TREK



Naheed Quaisar
CEO
Health Products For You



**Subscribe
Today**



Westfair
Business Journal
WESTFAIRONLINE.COM

HOW WESTCHESTER & FAIRFIELD WORK

LEGAL NOTICES | ON THE RECORD | NEWSLETTERS | BUSINESS LISTS

\$1/week

ENDORSEMENTS

"You lead with purpose, vision, and heart--always encouraging those around you to grow in their own leadership and seize opportunity!"

– Michelle C., Buzz Creators

"Congratulations Virginia! Your unwavering vision and ideas are shaping a brighter, bolder future for all of us." – Michelle L., Fairfield County Bank

"Thamara, your energy lifts others, thank you for inspiring, cheering us on, and making everyone feel valued." – Hiba A., The Bristol at Armonk

"You are a pioneer who created unique opportunities and exposure for women comedians. Through your dedication and inspiration Ladies of Laughter lives!" – Elizabeth A., Family

"ROSE is a POWERHOUSE WOMAN! She is the BEST combination of an innovative woman - CREATIVE & CARING! Let's Go, Rosie!" – Kelley B., Strategies for Wealth

"Your vision, courage, and unwavering commitment to innovation light the path for others to dream bigger, lead boldly, and break new ground." – Monica S., Girls Inc. of Westchester County

"You have had a profound impact on your students at the University of Bridgeport. It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to work with you!" – Randy L., University of Bridgeport

"Your leadership embodies perseverance, innovation, and impact at the highest level delivering positive transformation and impact for the community." – Lynda C., Yonkers Mayors Office

"Congratulations on your 2025 Women Innovators Honoree; your vision, resilience, and commitment to creating meaningful change is truly inspiring." – Jozeyl M., Jozy's Cafe



Regarded as one of the world's leading financial institutions, Bank of America serves individual consumers, small and middle-market businesses, and large corporations with a comprehensive suite of banking, investing, asset management, and other financial and risk management products and services.

For more than a decade, the bank has focused on responsible growth, aiming to be a source of stability for its customers and clients during challenging times. This commitment also extends to supporting the communities where the bank operates and ensuring it delivers more consistent results for shareholders through a well-understood risk framework.

Bank of America's guiding question, "What would you like the power to do?" reflects its ongoing efforts to deepen client relationships and foster shared success. The bank continually strives to innovate and adapt its services to meet the evolving needs of its clients and communities, reinforcing its role as a trusted partner in financial growth and stability across the globe.

WHITAKER'S

• GARAGE DOOR STORE •

Keeping your doors on track since 1955

In 1949, young entrepreneur Henry B. Whitaker founded his eponymous garage door company. In this pre-automated era, functionality was a top priority for homeowners. Henry's mission was to ensure that clients had high-quality doors at an affordable price, along with an attractive aesthetic—adding curb appeal to each home he helped transform. Starting in Yorktown Heights, New York, the business quickly gained a reputation for quality and customer care. Today, Casarra and Jonathan Cover, Henry's granddaughter, run the business out of a showroom in Peekskill, New York. Since acquiring the business in 2008 from her mother, Faye, Casarra and Jonathan have expanded on their namesake's work ethic. They now serve all of Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Rockland counties, as well as parts of Connecticut. No job is too big or small for this highly competent couple. They truly take the term "family business" to heart—they are part of the Whitaker family when you work with them.



The Bristol Assisted Living has been proudly serving seniors and their families since 2000. This year, the company celebrates 25 years of excellence—marking a quarter-century dedicated to redefining the standard for luxury senior living through exceptional service, compassion and care. At The Bristol, the mission is to ensure residents experience the finest in assisted living, providing extraordinary accommodations, personalized care, and an enriching lifestyle full of meaningful opportunities. The vision is to challenge every preconceived notion of what assisted living can be: a community defined by compassion, innovation, a continued sense of purpose for residents and peace of mind for their families. Each community offers independent and assisted living and state-of-the-art memory care programming. Reflections, a dedicated and secure neighborhood for residents living with Alzheimer's and other memory-related cognitive disorders, provides individualized care through evidence-based therapeutic programs tailored to residents' strengths and needs. Team members at The Bristol are the heart of the success, empowering residents through genuine connections, independence, empathy and joy. Their commitment to excellence was recognized when The Bristol earned certification as a Great Place to Work in 2025—a distinction that affirms the positive culture they help create every day. With locations across New York and New Jersey, The Bristol is honored to be part of the Westchester community, with residences in White Plains and Armonk. The company looks forward to continuing to enrich lives, build connections and serve the Westchester community for many years to come. For more information and a complete list of locations, visit thebristol.com.



Proudly serving clients in real estate law, land use, zoning and development, litigation, trusts, estates and elder law, public and private finance (including tax-exempt and taxable bond financing), corporate law, telecommunications, energy and environmental law, cannabis law and nonprofit organizations. For over 50 years, it has established itself as the leading law firm serving a vast region that includes Westchester, New York City, Connecticut and the Hudson River Valley. The firm's foundation is local and it enjoys enduring relationships with leaders, institutions and decision-makers in the communities it serves.



Fairfield County Bank®

Established in 1871, Fairfield County Bank is located throughout Fairfield County, Connecticut. With a proud heritage of strength and soundness, underscored by a five-star rating for financial strength from Bauer Financial Inc., the nation's leading bank rating firm, the bank offers easy access to a full range of financial services for personal and business clients. Bank clients enjoy convenient office locations as well as robust digital solutions, enabling them to bank locally wherever they go. The bank actively invests in the communities it serves through both commercial and residential lending, while also demonstrating strong community engagement with extensive employee volunteerism and corporate contributions. Clients can rest assured knowing that when they put their money in Fairfield County Bank, it stays in Fairfield County, helping to strengthen the community. Most importantly, the bank's dedicated employees provide personalized service and an unwavering commitment, which earned Fairfield County Bank the title of the No. 1 bank in Connecticut on Forbes' 2025 Best-in-State list. To learn more about Fairfield County Bank and why clients rank the bank No. 1 in customer service in a Rival benchmarking study, visit fairfieldcountybank.com.



Powered by Ameriprise
Financial

Rise Private Wealth Management, part of Ameriprise Financial Services, works with high-net-worth individuals and families to provide financial advice focused on confidence, simplicity, and success. Our goal is to help clients achieve their goals and make well-informed decisions aligned with their values. Through comprehensive planning, we help clients answer whether they will run out of money before they run out of life. Our advisors and staff bring diverse expertise, and clients have access to specialists in financial planning, investment, and insurance. With offices in New York, California, New Hampshire, Maine, Florida, and Kansas, Rise's team is more than 40% women—well above the industry average. Rise has been recognized by Barron's as a Top 250 Private Wealth Management Team (2024-2025) and by Forbes as a Best-in-State Wealth Management Team (2023-2025). These rankings are based on surveys and data on assets, revenue, and practice quality. Neither Ameriprise nor its advisors pay for these rankings. Investment products are not insured by the FDIC or any federal agency and involve risks, including potential loss of principal. Services are offered through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Securities are offered by Ameriprise Financial, member FINRA and SIPC.

© 2025 Ameriprise Financial. All rights reserved.



Nestled on the Pelham border in Mount Vernon, New York, Wartburg is a nationally recognized leader in senior living and healthcare. For 159 years, Wartburg has provided a continuum of care on its 34-acre campus, offering independent and assisted living, rehabilitation, memory care, and adult day programs. With a deep commitment to supporting families at every stage of aging, Wartburg seamlessly combines medical excellence with compassionate caregiving and holistic wellness. At the core of Wartburg's mission is innovation rooted in tradition. The newly constructed Berkemeier Living Center reflects this philosophy—merging modern architecture and technology within a historic setting. This reimagined care model provides a dignified approach to memory care, supporting residents' independence and enhancing their quality of life. Wartburg's impact extends beyond its residents. Through caregiver support programs, community partnerships, and education, it provides essential resources to help families navigate aging with confidence. Recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best nursing homes in New York for 13 consecutive years, Wartburg continues to set the standard in senior care. More than a campus, Wartburg is a community where lives are enriched, stories are honored, and every person is treated with dignity and respect.



Established in 1982, the Yonkers Industrial Development Agency is a public benefit corporation that provides business development incentives to promote economic growth and job creation in the city of Yonkers. The agency's mission includes undertaking projects and initiatives that advance job opportunities, health, prosperity, and the economic welfare of Yonkers residents. It also aims to improve recreational opportunities, prosperity, and living standards. YIDA works to create economic development and employment throughout Yonkers by attracting new businesses, retaining existing ones, and helping them become more competitive in a global marketplace. For more information, visit yonkersida.com. The Yonkers Economic Development Corporation focuses on economic growth while incorporating environmental considerations into its projects.



A privately held company based in Mount Kisco, New York, Westfair Communications Inc. is the home of the Westfair Business Journal, which you can find online and which now integrate content from former publication WAG magazine, providing readers with a greater variety of business news and features. Westfair also publishes the popular News @ Noon e-newsletters, for late-breaking developments, as well as industry-specific newsletters. For more than 60 years, the Business Journals have been the only weekly countywide business publications. They were founded by former Westchester resident David Moore, a grandson of influential New York publisher Joseph Pulitzer, and John Smith, a former Wall Street Journal editor. In keeping with their founders' principles, the publications focus on the business community in Fairfield, Westchester and the rest of the Hudson Valley with breaking news, trends, tips and behind-the-scenes profiles among the papers' specialties. (The new content takes you beyond the business world to explore, food, travel, health/wellness and the home, while the entertainment-flavored calendar suggests where you should be and when.) The papers and newsletters have gained credibility and respect in the region for their honest, timely insights. Westfair also sponsors interactive programs for its readers, some of which are joint ventures with other businesses or community organizations. These programs cover a variety of subjects and take different forms, including seminars, expos, conferences, roundtable discussions and debates. For more, visit westfaironline.com or call 914-694-3600.



See what's next

How can you gain a strategic advantage?

Through data-driven insights, cutting-edge digital tools
and industry-leading security designed to drive your business.

What would you like the power to do?®

Start the conversation

Lauren Azizian, lauren.azizian@bofa.com
business.bofa.com

BANK OF AMERICA 

"Bank of America" and "BoFA Securities" are the marketing names used by the Global Banking and Global Markets divisions of Bank of America Corporation. Lending, derivatives, other commercial banking activities, and trading in certain financial instruments are performed globally by banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation, including Bank of America, N.A., Member FDIC. Trading in securities and financial instruments, and strategic advisory, and other investment banking activities, are performed globally by investment banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation ("Investment Banking Affiliates"), including, in the United States, BoFA Securities, Inc., which is a registered broker-dealer and Member of SIPC, and, in other jurisdictions, by locally registered entities. BoFA Securities, Inc. is a registered futures commission merchant with the CFTC and a member of the NFA.

Investment products offered by Investment Banking Affiliates:

Are Not FDIC Insured	Are Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------

©2025 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved. GBGM-571-AD 8006184