



# **NATIONAL FEDERATION**

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# **FOR JUST COMMUNITIES™**

**of Western New York, Inc.**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact Person: Lana D. Benatovich, President, 853-9596**

The National Federation for Just Communities of WNY, Inc. will present the **2010 NFJC Community Leader Awards Luncheon** on **Thursday, January 21, 2010, 12 Noon** at the **Buffalo Convention Center**. Tickets are available for the Luncheon by contacting the NFJC of WNY at **853-9596**.

Mary H. Gresham, Ph.D., Chair of The NFJC of WNY, Inc. and Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo has announced that the NFJC will honor the following local individuals and organizations that have distinguished themselves as leaders in our community through their work on behalf of others. The Luncheon is co-sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York and M&T Bank. The event is co-chaired by Leslie G. Garrity, VP of Public Relations and Corporate Communications for First Niagara, and Marie E. Hare, VP of Philanthropy and Civic Affairs for KeyBank. Both have served as Board members of the NFJC of WNY, and are active community leaders.

The list of Awardees is as follows:

**Agency: *PUSH Buffalo*** - PUSH Buffalo is a grassroots, non-profit community organization working to rebuild the West Side of Buffalo. PUSH organizes residents to achieve greater community control. Through action oriented campaigns, PUSH helps to create and implement action plans for improving the neighborhood. PUSH also advocates for comprehensive reform of housing policy and redevelops vacant housing for occupancy by low-income residents. Recently featured in the television show, "*Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*", PUSH Buffalo works to provide employment opportunities and training for West Side residents within their community.

**Arts: *Audre J. Bunis*** – Ms. Bunis has long been a force in the Buffalo Arts scene. A member of the Boards of Daemen College, The Chautauqua Institution, and the Western New York Artists Group, *Art Dialogue*, Ms. Bunis has continuously served as a cultural advocate for Western New York. She was President of the Board of Trustees for Studio Arena where she created the *Take A Seat* initiative. As a Board Member of the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Ms. Bunis was instrumental in the construction of the new museum building, having been Co-Chair of both the Capital Campaign Community Division, and the New Museum Opening committees.

**Business: Robert M. Zak** – Mr. Zak is President and CEO of Merchants Insurance Group and serves as the Merchants’ primary representative to industry trade groups, government regulators, and charitable organizations. A native Western New Yorker and graduate of the University at Buffalo, Mr. Zak serves as a director, trustee, or member of the Dean’s Advisory Council of the Wehle School of Business at Canisius College, the University at Buffalo School of Management Dean’s Advisory Council, the Kaleida Health System, the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, Rand Capital Corporation, The 100 Club of Buffalo and Western New York. He is on the Board of Directors of the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise.

**Community Service:**

**Jennifer Berryman** – Mrs. Berryman has been an Executive Assistant at Ingram Micro since 1997, and she applies the same marketing, communications and organizational skills that have made her professionally successful in her civic and volunteer endeavors. She currently sits on the Boards of Directors for the Golden Retriever Rescue Operating with Love Statewide (GROWLS) and has worked with the SPCA on its Paws in the Park fundraising program. Jennifer is active with the Junior League of Buffalo where she advocates for women in volunteerism, and she is a Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator for the Dreams to Memories Foundation that works with terminally ill adults. She is on the Board and a Bantu Youth Council Member for Literacy Volunteers, which provides educational and cultural resources for Somali refugees.

**Michael Martin** - Mr. Martin is the Executive Director of Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, which provides quality human services that meet the needs of the off-reservation Native American community in Erie and Niagara Counties. A leader in his field, Mr. Martin is involved with several organizations, including the National Urban Indian Family Coalition, and the Native American Leadership Commission on Health and Aids. He is a Co-Founder of Native American in Business, Economics and has participated in international exchanges aimed at the preservation of indigenous cultures. His Board involvement includes, the Emergency Food and Shelter Board of the United Way, the Communities of Color Coalition of NYS, and the Workforce Investment Boards of Erie and Niagara Counties, and the NFJC of WNY.

**Joyce C. and Roy A. Mathis** – Joyce and Roy Mathis have dedicated themselves to spreading the joy and beauty of music to the WNY Community through their volunteer efforts. Both are members of the American Choral Directors Association, Opera Buffs, and NAM. They have worked extensively with the Royal Serenaders Male Chorus, of which Roy is a founding member and for which Joyce is the accompanist. Joyce, a graduate of Buffalo State College, is currently the Organist/Choir Director for Our Savior Lutheran Church and is a member of the AKA Sorority. Roy is Director of Music Ministry at Pilgrim St. Luke. Key to their volunteerism is helping to pass on the musical legacy and practices of both traditional church doctrine and that of the traditional African American Spirituals. They have participated in conferences designed to expose younger people to those traditions and have preserved much of this cultural history through their teaching efforts.



**Hon. William T. Stachowski** – Born and raised in the Kaisertown section of Buffalo, Mr. Stachowski entered public service in 1974 when he became an Erie County Legislator. He presently serves as the Senator for NY's 58<sup>th</sup> district and is Chair of the Senate Commerce, Economic and Small Business Committee. Senator Stachowski is a member of many organizations and has served on the Board for the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, the Hunter's Hope Foundation, St. Mary's School for the Deaf, and the Ilio DiPaolo Scholarship Committee. He is a volunteer with the Skating Association for the Blind and Handicapped and is a football coach for St. Francis High School.

**Corporate: Greatbatch, Inc.** – Greatbatch, Inc. is a leading developer and manufacturer of critical products used in implantable medical devices such as pacemakers. Founded in 1970 by Wilson Greatbatch, the company recently completed their new Corporate Headquarters in Clarence and has a manufacturing facility in Alden. Today lead by President/CEO Thomas Hook, Greatbatch is a proud and active member of this community, and in addition to supporting its associates volunteer efforts, the company is directly involved with the American Heart Association, the Alzheimer's Association, Gilda's Club, and Kids Escaping Drugs. Greatbatch also supports the University at Buffalo, Buffalo State College, Canisius College, and St. Bonaventure University.

**Education: Donald A. and Jane Ogilvie** –The immediate past Board Chair of the NFJC, Don Ogilvie is District Superintendent of Erie 1 BOCES, where as a field representative of the Commissioner of Education he works to provide instructional, managerial, and technology services to 20 school districts in Erie County as well as to the Buffalo Public Schools. He is a Trustee of WNED's Education Service General Services, and is on the Executive Committee of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County. Jane, too, is with Erie 1 BOCES, where she serves as Director of Community Youth Development and Student Support Services. Under her direction, the Division has developed cross-systems partnerships that improve cultural competency and help create leadership opportunities for both traditional and non-traditional youth leaders. She has served on the Boards of Planned Parenthood, Leadership Buffalo and Western New York United Against Drug and Alcohol and has chaired the Gilda's Club Gingerbread Event. Together, the Ogilvies co-chaired the United Way Campaign and the Buffalo Philharmonic Opening Night Gala.

**Family: Dominic V. and Diane Cortese** – The Cortese family, in both their professional and civic endeavors, are dedicated to the welfare and development of the WNY community. Dominic is President of Cortese Brothers Construction Company in Depew, and is best known for his weekly *Home Improvement Hour* radio show on WBEN. He is active in the Clarence Rotary Club, where he has served as District Assistant Governor. He facilitates the annual Rotary Conference for a New Generation at Clarence High School, and he mentors students at the CEL program and at Clarence Middle School. He is a Board member of the Brothers of Mercy Foundation, and with his family, Dominic is active in Our Lady of Peace Parish, for which he served as Council President.



Diane, a Crisis Phone Counselor for Crisis Services since 1993, is also active in Rotary. She is Director of the Mentoring Program at Clarence Middle School and a mentor herself. She is Co-Chair of Rotary's Annual Needy Children's Christmas Party. She has served as a volunteer and/or Board Member for the Nicaraguan Mission Project, the Clarence Contemporary Club, and the Brothers of Mercy Foundation. Since 1997, she has also been a Board Member for the TRY (Teaching and Restoring Youth) Young Women's Shelter.

**Healthcare: *Ann F. Monroe*** – Ms. Monroe is President of the Community Health Foundation, which serves the Buffalo and Syracuse regions to improve the health systems and outcomes for frail elders and children in communities of poverty. She has 30 years experience in health and human services and she chairs the Steering Committee for the NY Community Health Planning Institute. She is Board Secretary for Grantmakers in Health, and President of the WNY Grantmakers. She serves on the Consensus Standards Approval Committee of the National Quality Forum, is a former Board Member of the LeapFrog group and the California Breast Center Treatment Fund, and was a Founding Board Member of CaliforniaKids.

***Dr. Andrew G. and Dr. Helen H. Cappuccino*** – Dr. Andrew Cappuccino is a graduate of John Hopkins University and Dr. Helen was the first ever graduate of UB's Presidential Honors Program, summa cum laude. Both are Board Certified in their medical specialties, he in orthopedics and spine and she in general surgery, and each has been nationally recognized for their respective work. Dr. Andrew has been on the Buffalo Bills Medical Staff for 15 years, and it was his quick thinking and care that allowed Kevin Everett to recover after his tragic injury. Dr. Helen recently joined Roswell Park where she surgical treats breast cancer patients. The two, along with their six children, are active civically, and for the last two years have gone on medical mission trips to Africa to perform spine, orthopedic, and general surgery to those in need. Dr. Helen has served on the Boards of the Albright Knox, the UB Foundation, the Keenan Center, and the Lockport City Ballet. They have established Scholarships at UB and in Dr. Andrew's hometown of Nyack, New York.

**Interfaith: *Rev. Richard G. Stewart*** – Rev. Stewart is retired Pastor of Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church and founder of the Central City Café. Dedicated to feeding the hungry and homeless in Buffalo since 1990, Central City stands as a testament to Rev. Stewart's commitment to the community and his passion to work with religious leaders of other faiths to serve the common good. The project began when he brought together other Methodist ministers from the city to buy the building of a church that was closing its doors. Today, thanks to his constant efforts, and his work with faith leaders throughout the city and into the suburbs, Central City Café not only feeds the hungry and homeless, but also brings in advisors from Legal Aid, The Veteran's Administration Services, and other agencies to help provide much needed resources to the Café's clientele.



**Memorial tribute to *Cantor Susan Wehle*** – A victim of the crash of Flight 3407, Ms. Wehle was Cantor at Temple Beth Am in Williamsville. Guided by her faith and love of humanity, Ms. Wehle worked to help those in her congregation and others to make their faith a truly personal expression. Active in Interfaith and Cross Cultural work, Ms. Wehle honored the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. and the anniversary of the death of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a civil rights activist, by urging her congregants to perform good deeds. The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Cantor Wehle reached out with a one-world view and developed a program for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian youth, to promote dialogue and respect amongst these groups. Cantor Wehle also taught musical and spiritual workshops and conducted youth and adult choirs.

**Law Enforcement: *Vanita L. Evans*** – Ms. Evans holds an MA in Education-Counseling from Niagara University and is a Community Outreach Specialist with the FBI in Buffalo. Ms. Evans oversees the Community Partnership Program and the Citizen's Academy, and she both coordinates the Buffalo Division Speaker's Bureau, and provides educational presentations to the community. She is a member of the Crime Prevention Association of WNY, the American Association of University Women of Buffalo (Sister-to-Sister), and other organizations. Ms. Evans is an adjunct professor at Daemen College Higher Education Opportunity Program, a member of True Bethel Baptist Church, and a member of Delta Sigma Delta Sorority, Inc. Buffalo Alumnae Chapter.

**Legal: *Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged (LSED)*** – Founded in 1978, LSED is a not-for-profit agency whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the elderly, disabled, and low-income persons in Western New York. They provide free civil legal services, primarily to people who are 60 or older, with the goal of using the legal system to assure that their clients may live independently and with dignity in their retirement years. LSED also provides assistance to younger and/or low-income persons as their funding permits.

**Media: *John Di Sciullo*** – Mr. Di Sciullo is the Director of Strategic Content, News Operations, and Community Affairs with WKBW TV and has long worked to give media attention to Buffalo events, programs, and organizations. An active volunteer who often emcees local charitable fundraisers, John is the Executive Producer of the annual Variety Kids Telethon. Always responsive to the needs within the community, John, especially in his work with AM Buffalo, has helped recognize and promote the impact and needs of organizations like Shea's Buffalo, The Taste of Buffalo, The NFJC, The Buffalo Urban League, and Summit Educational Resources. Innately interested in representing the humane and compassionate side of media, John eagerly promotes that which is good about WNY so that it can be represented and told through a fair eye to others.



**Philanthropy: *Richard and Karen Penfold*** – The Penfolds have long been supporters of the WNY community, dating back to when they founded the C.I.D. group of companies in 1974. Well known and acknowledged for their philanthropic work, the Penfolds have been very supportive of many educational institutions in and around the Buffalo area, including, St. Mary’s High School, St. Francis High School, Immaculata Academy, Buffalo State College, and Trocaire College. Religion has also been a strong motivator behind their charitable work, and they have also been supporters of St. Bernadette RC Church, having served on several committees, the Bishop’s Council of the Laity, and the Sisters of Mercy 21<sup>st</sup> Century Club and Legacy Society. Their Foundation work includes that with the Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, Kenmore Mercy Foundation, and they have been strong supporters of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, the American Heart Association, and many others.

**Public Relations: *Daryl E. Rasuli*** – Mr. Rasuli is inherently concerned with social justice, and in his Public Relations work he has sought to give voice and representation to groups and issues related to diversity and inclusion. Mr. Rasuli retired as the Communications Director of the NFTA. He is President of Rasuli and Associates, and serves as a Consumer Engagement Associate for the P2 collaboration. A longtime Community Advocate, Mr. Rasuli has served on many boards and participated in events dedicated to uplift the region. He wrote the initial program for the Black Leadership Forum, and while living in California he worked to promote the first Kwanzaa celebrations. He has served on the Boards of the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers, Buffalo Binational Tourism Association, Ujima Theater, Historical Society, the Buffalo Zoological Society, and the Buffalo Convention and Visitors Bureau. Presently, he is Vice Chair of the NFJC of WNY, serves on the Arts Council, and is the president of the advisory board of the African American Cultural Arts Collective, which consists of artistic African American cultural organizations dedicated to up-grading their capacity and marketability.

**Special Services: *Marlene A. Schillinger*** – Ms. Schillinger has been the Executive Director of Jewish Family Services of Buffalo and Erie County since 1995, and under her direction that agency has dramatically increased its work as a social services provider in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. In addition to her successes in expanding the resources and fiscal strength of the agency during her tenure, Ms. Schillinger has lead a program of strategic growth that has lead to Jewish Family Services’ expansion into the fields of gambling recovery, eating disorder therapy, services for gay, lesbian, and transgendered WNY’ers, elder services, adoption, immigrant and refugee counseling, and Jewish based services. Not only has she coordinated the renovation of Jewish Family Service’s main facility, she has also worked to expand programs and services to their three satellite offices.



**Special Award: James R.Kaskie & Jody L. Lomeo** – Mr. Kaskie and Mr. Lomeo are being jointly honored for their breakthrough work at uniting ECMC and Kaleida Health. A difficult process at times, as the merger was mandated by the State, Mr. Kaskie and Mr. Lomeo worked to create an air of cooperation and engaged in open, honest, and frank dialogue to bring their two institutions together in order to most effectively serve this community and meet its medical needs. Mr. Kaskie is President and CEO of both Kaleida Health and the new Great Lakes Health System of WNY. Mr. Lomeo, a former Board Chair of ECMC, is CEO of ECMC Corp., and is Vice Chair of Great Lakes Health System of WNY.

**Youth awards will be presented to: Aden Cook, Grand Island High School; Angelica Fournier, WNY Maritime Charter School; Lauren T. Hoffman, Nardin Academy; Je’Nae T. Kelley, Charter School for Applied Technology; Danielle Kubena, Clarence High School; James Maiarana, St. Joseph’s Collegiate; Nick Mayes, Niagara Falls High School; Caralyn Mirand, The Park School; Andrew F. Osei, Canisius High School; MiRonda A. Piphus, McKinley High School; and Jaz’mine R. Robinson, Hutchinson Technical High School.**

**The Elizabeth A. Hickey Award** will be presented to **Dalya Kefi, Williamsville South High School.**

**The Dr. Manch Scholarship Award** will be presented to **Rebecca N. Robles, Hutchinson Technical High School.**

For more information and/or tickets to this event, call the NFJC at 716.853.9596.

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*The National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York, Inc. (NFJC), is a human relations organization dedicated to overcoming racism, bias, and discrimination by building understanding, respect and trust through education, advocacy and community involvement.*