Honorees announced for YWCA 44th Tribute to Women of INfluence (TWIN)

Companies and Organizations Honor Their Highest Achieving Women in a Celebration of Empowerment

November 22, 2019—YWCA Northern New Jersey (formerly YWCA Bergen County) is thrilled to announce its 44th Tribute to Women of Influence (TWIN) honorees who will be recognized at a prestigious celebration of empowerment on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 (8:00-10:00 am) at Stony Hill Inn, Hackensack, NJ.

Our 2019 TWIN honorees are:

- Donna Brangaccio, Chief Operating Officer, McLaren Engineering Group
- Kyung Hee A. Choi, Vice President, Asian Health Services, Holy Name Medical Center
- Monica Council-Miles, Grants & Volunteer Administrator, Social Investing, BD
- Karen Edler, Esq., Of Counsel, Price, Shulman, Meese, & D'Arminio
- Donna Koeniges, Executive Assistant, SUEZ
- Carla Pappalardo, Community Activist, Women for Progress
- Naglaa Rizk, MD, NHA, FACOG, Director of Ambulatory Care, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center
- Cora Taylor, Chief Warrant Officer, Bergen County Sheriff’s Office
- Melissa Van Der Wall, Dean of Students, Ramapo College of New Jersey

Established by YWCA Northern New Jersey in 1975, TWIN gives businesses and organizations an opportunity to honor their highest achieving women and gather together to network and celebrate success. TWIN honorees have excelled in their fields and made significant contributions to their organizations and communities.

“When TWIN was established in 1975, our purpose was to help our corporate partners recognize women on their staff whose achievements might otherwise be overlooked or taken for granted compared to their male counterparts,” says YWCA Northern NJ CEO Helen Archontou. “Much about our world and women’s place in it has changed, but women still grapple with issues of equal pay, equal opportunities, and work-life balance. The heart of TWIN remains to honor women of achievement and celebrate organizations that create cultures in which women can thrive.”

Learn how to sponsor, support, advertise, or attend TWIN by visiting ywcannj.org/twin-tribute-to-women-influence/ or contacting Lori Murray at lmurray@ywcannj.org or at 201 345-1888.
Donna Brangaccio
Chief Operating Officer
McLaren Engineering Group

Donna Brangaccio oversees the firm’s strategic initiatives, safety, and daily operations with proven, results-driven leadership. She has been vital in assessing the financial and operating performance of 7 technical divisions across 11 locations worldwide while supporting overall financial objectives. During her 25-year career, Donna has been pivotal in helping McLaren grow into an industry leader. She uses her influential leadership style to champion the company’s proactive, team-player mindset and help guide the corporate culture.

Donna is a member of the Women’s Leadership Committee, 401k Advisory Committee, Procedures Committee, ESOP Fiduciary Committee and is the ESOP Communications Committee Management liaison.

Outside of the office, Donna is a wife, mother, and an elected School District Council Representative, providing leadership training and promoting cooperation between the community and administration. Through her dedication, Donna makes significant contributions to McLaren and to her community.

Nominated by: McLaren Engineering Group

Kyung Hee A. Choi
Vice President, Asian Health Services
Holy Name Medical Center

Through Kyung Hee A. Choi’s leadership, Asian Health Services (AHS) has become a national model for culturally focused and linguistically sensitive healthcare, transforming Holy Name Medical Center into a “medical home” for more than 350,000 Asians in the NJ/NY area.

Kyung Hee spearheads a coalition of staff, physicians, faith-based and community organizations, and volunteers to provide outreach screening programs to thousands of low-income, uninsured, and underinsured Asians each year. Since 2010, AHS has also assisted more than 8,000 uninsured Asian families to obtain health insurance coverage.

Kyung Hee has mentored more than 100 professionals and students. She is the co-author of recommendations on how to close the gap in health disparities and other inequities among the Asian population in NJ. Kyung Hee has received numerous awards for her career and community service, including 2019 ROI-NJ Influencers: People of Color; 2018 NJBIZ 50 Best Women in Business Award; 2017 NJBIZ Public Health Hero Award; the American Conference on Diversity Humanitarian Award; Spirit of Asian-American Federation Award; Women’s Leadership Award from the NJ Legislature; and Evangelina Menendez Trailblazer Award.

Nominated by: Holy Name Medical Center
Monica Council-Miles  
Grants & Volunteer Administrator, Social Investing  
BD

As a member of the BD Social Investing team, Monica Council-Miles oversees corporate giving and grant programs, employee giving, state and local volunteerism, and special events. She develops relationships with local and global nonprofit organizations. Monica supports BD’s associate resource groups to fulfill inclusion and diversity goals through team-based volunteer opportunities and community engagement.

In 2017, Monica launched BD’s first multi-site employee volunteer event: The BD Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. In collaboration with Rise Against Hunger, BD associates across the US pack meals for vulnerable communities across the globe. Under Monica’s leadership, BD will pack over one million meals by 2020.

Prior to joining BD, Monica worked at Motown Records, WNYW Channel 5, and VIACOM where she supported creative marketing strategies for Nickelodeon and Spike TV brands.

Monica is a 2017 Bergen LEADS fellow, and a management associate with the Information Technology Senior Management Forum. She served as school district parent liaison for the Pennsylvania Education Department’s Dyslexia Pilot Program, and is a member of National Black MBA Association.

Nominated by: BD

Karen Edler, Esq.  
Of Counsel  
Price, Shulman, Meese, & D'Arminio, P.C.

Karen Edler is the practice leader of Price, Shulman, Meese, & D'Arminio’s Education Law Group, with over two decades of experience in education law, and an accomplished commercial law practitioner.

Karen zealously advocates for providing students with a free, appropriate public education under IDEA and for obtaining accommodations for people of all ages under Section 504. Karen represents students with educational programming, placement, and disciplinary matters in New Jersey and New York, and also provides special needs planning services such as Special Needs Trusts and guardianship applications.

Karen is a pro bono attorney and long-time mentor for Volunteer Lawyers for Justice’s Children’s Representation Program. For over two decades, she has also been a bible school teacher and youth group assistant.

Nominated by: Price, Shulman, Meese, & D'Arminio, P.C.
Donna Koeniges has worked as an Executive Assistant at SUEZ for 22 years, currently for CEO Nadine Leslie, the first woman ever appointed to this position in North America. Donna is also Executive Assistant to the CFO. For many years, Donna has planned and organized the annual corporate holiday and service award dinner. She has been a Certified Administrative Professional in Organizational Management through the International Association of Administrative Professionals since 2005.

Donna always finds time to volunteer on behalf of SUEZ in our local communities, including Read Across America Day for Bergenfield Head Start, Spectrum for Living, Habitat for Humanity, MDA Summer Camp, Bergen Family Center, YWCA Northern NJ Clothesline Project, United Way Day of Caring, and Children's Aid and Family Services Annual Field Day.

Donna has passed along her giving spirit to her two teenage children, and they have participated in mission trips together, doing home improvement projects for the elderly and less fortunate for Little Acts of Love in Reading, PA.

Nominated by: SUEZ

Carla Pappalardo, Director of Events/Programming for Women for Progress, is also an avid volunteer in the Wyckoff school system. Carla has led and served on numerous committees, including as Executive Producer of FLOW Follies, the largest college scholarship fundraising organization in her community, annually raising around $40,000 for graduating seniors. Carla was invited to serve on several joint committees including the Municipal Alliance and the 2012 Ramapo Indian Hills Strategic Planning Committee for the Board of Education.

A member of the Wyckoff Democratic County Committee and a founding member of the Wyckoff Democratic Club, Carla ran for Wyckoff Township Committee in 2017 and 2018.

Carla was a labor relations attorney at United Airlines and chief negotiator for K+S and Morton Salt during their merger.

Nominated by: Women for Progress
Naglaa Rizk, MD, NHA, FACOG  
Medical Director of Ambulatory Care  
Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

In addition to her role as Medical Director for Bergen New Bridge’s Ambulatory Services, Dr. Naglaa Rizk is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Women’s Health at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School.

Dr. Rizk is a well-respected and published thought leader in her field. Her innovative approach of blending health and wellness in the management of women’s health issues has brought a new dimension of treatment options to the patients and communities served by the Medical Center while filling a significant gap in care identified in Bergen County.

Bergen New Bridge—a not-for-profit safety net facility providing high-quality comprehensive services—is also a Veterans Community Care Provider and a Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality in the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) for 2019.

Nominated by: Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

Cora Taylor  
Chief Warrant Officer  
Bergen County Sheriff’s Office

Cora Taylor is a veteran of the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office who retired in 2016 as Detective Lieutenant with over 25 years of law enforcement experience.

During her career with the Prosecutor’s Office, Cora served on the Special Victims Unit where she conducted high-profile investigations of sex crimes and child abuse. She subsequently worked for Internal Affairs and was then promoted to Detective Lieutenant where she was responsible for supervising criminal investigations.

Cora has a bachelor’s degree from William Paterson University.

Nominated by: YWCA Northern New Jersey
Melissa Van Der Wall  
Dean of Students  
Ramapo College of New Jersey

As Dean of Students, Melissa Van Der Wall is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive campus environment for nearly 6,000 students. She serves as the second in charge of the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, and is a campus leader and mentor to students and staff alike. Often heard referring to herself as Dean “for” Students, Melissa has developed a vibrant, resourceful, and inclusive community.

Among her accomplishments, Melissa co-founded the College’s Behavioral Intervention Team to provide resources and support for adapting to college life; established the Good Samaritan Policy to put the health and safety of students first; and initiated the work of the Name Committee to create an affirming environment for all students, particularly those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

Melissa created the Office of Violence Prevention to coordinate and centralize sexual violence and bystander intervention programs; has testified before the Senate Higher Education Committee on campus sexual assaults; and co-chairs the Culture of Respect Collective to work toward eradicating campus sexual violence.

Nominated by: Ramapo College of New Jersey

About YWCA Northern New Jersey  
YWCA Northern New Jersey is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting equality for all. We operate healingSPACE, Bergen County’s only Sexual Violence Resource Center (hotline: 201-487-2227), and are a leading provider of year-round child care, swim, and wellness programs. Our 100th year kicks off the expansion of our service area to include Essex, Hudson, Morris, and Passaic counties and our continued commitment to Bergen. We improve the lives of thousands of women, girls, and families with the generous support of our donors. Learn more by visiting ywcannj.org, following @ywcanjj on social media, and downloading the healingSPACE app from your app store.

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