

2003 Inductees



Ann W. Bunis, 1901-1999:

Dressmaker, designer, entrepreneur, wife and mother, Anne Bunis did it all in an era when women were not supposed to. A native of Russia, she progressed from the archetypical immigrant girl, helping support her siblings as a seamstress, to creating her own family. As a young wife and mother she put her talent for retail to work in the family's flat on Hertel Avenue. The enterprise became the first Sample Shop from which she sold "off price" dresses to a growing clientele.

The business grew to more than a dozen stores doing millions of dollars in sales, all while she raised three children. In retirement, she put her extraordinary talents to work for dozens of community organizations rounding out the portrait of a woman who is a model for all of us.

Alice Mae Jemison, 1901-1964:

A politician, activist and journalist, Alice Mae Jemison was an adamant defender of Native American rights. Born on the Seneca's Cattaraugus Reservation into a politically active family, Ms. Jemison began her public career in the defense of two Indian women accused of murder in Buffalo. She continued as a columnist for the North American Indian Newspaper Alliance and a lobbyist for the Seneca Nation of Indians in Washington, D.C. Her defense of Indian treaty rights and the sovereignty of Indian nations put her at odds with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and allied her with unpopular fringe organizations exploiting Indian discontent. To some of her contemporaries she was controversial but to advocates of Native American's rights she is a hero.



Bertha S. Laury:

Bertha Laury's personal and professional life has been defined by her need to help people help themselves. The young social worker and educator in 1966 developed a pioneering infant day care center for unwed mothers reflecting her ongoing concern for the health and well being of the young and disadvantaged. She helped develop a comprehensive service that eventually reduced teen pregnancy in Buffalo and Erie County. The University at Buffalo educator and administrator trained hundreds of aspiring social workers leading them to the values and capabilities that distinguished her performance. She was the first African American woman to serve as president of the Health Care Plan Board of Directors and the first chair of the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York.

Gloria R. Lucker:

Gloria Lucker lives by her own rule: "do the right thing because it's the right thing to do." Starting a business was the right thing for her when she saw a need and knew how to meet it. Her innovative occupational therapy program has been the right thing for the hundreds of rural residents and disabled school children that it serves. Her management style has enhanced career opportunities for countless women and minorities and she has supported aspiring business women through the local chapter of National Association of Women Business Owners. Many women benefit from her leadership in community service through organizations like Everywoman Opportunity Center and the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women.



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Brenda W. McDuffie:

Brenda McDuffie is known for her passionate commitment to the Western New York community, especially those within it who need a helping hand. As a dedicated professional working with an array of public service organizations from the American Red Cross to the United Way to Legal Aid, she has extended her warmth and compassion as well as a helping hand. There is hardly a community service organization that she has not served as a volunteer, advisor or board member. The former executive director of the Buffalo and Erie County Private Industry Council and current chief executive officer of the Buffalo Urban League, continues to enhance the quality of life in this community.

Denise E. O'Donnell:

An inviting smile and a razor sharp mind are among many reasons why Denise E. O'Donnell is regarded by her associates as one of the legal community's greatest assets. The first woman to serve as United States Attorney for the state's Western District is also known for her energy and dedication to her profession and community. Her accomplishments and contributions fill a multi-page resume that is an inspiration for women in and out of her profession. A former vice chair of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee in Washington, D.C., her influences has extended beyond Western New York. Since 2001, Mrs. O'Donnell has used her extensive civil and criminal litigation experience in federal courts as a partner with Hodgson Russ.



Myrna F. Young:

As Executive Director of Everywoman Opportunity Center, Myrna Young's job is to help other women get jobs. She has done that with astounding success. She and the pioneering Everywoman Opportunity Center, which she has directed for the past two decades, have opened the door to productive and rewarding lives for thousands of displaced homemakers, single mothers and disadvantaged women. Their program serves as a model for others in the state and around the country and has gained national recognition. Her tireless and continuing mission to empower women started decades before she came to Western New York where more than 25 years ago she helped form the Niagara Frontier National Women's Political Caucus and later the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women.