

BIG I | WESTCHESTER

60 years

EDAY

**"NAVIGATING
THE CURRENT
MARKET"**

**WHOLESALE
PANEL IN THE
MORNING**

**CARRIER
PANEL IN THE
AFTERNOON**

September 23, 2026

The Opus Westchester • 3 Renaissance Square, WhitePlains, NY 10601



INSURANCE.

Built on Trust. Powered by People.

 Utica National Insurance Group®

Utica National Insurance Group is honored to be named a **Top Partner Regional Carrier for Commercial Lines for the sixth year in a row** by Big I Westchester.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate our continued partnership with your organization and with the **Independent Agents of Westchester.**

**Thank you – and congratulations
to all of the other honorees!**

Utica Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliated companies, New Hartford, NY 13413

BIG I

WESTCHESTER

Committee Members 2026

Committee

Carl Ranieri

D.C. Ranieri Insurance Agency
Big I Westchester Vice President

Michael Milano

Cross Agency
Big I Westchester Secretary/Treasurer

Adam Antoinette

Levitt-Fuirst
Big I Westchester Past President, Director

Janine Andros

NFP
Big I Westchester Director

Laura Murray-Faggella

Big I Westchester Director

Susan Barros

The Beaumont Group, Inc.
Executive Director, Big I Westchester

Frederick H. Dayton Chairperson

Neil Bush

Allan M. Block Agency, Inc.

Top Partner Awards Chairperson

Glenn Bindow

Cross Agency
Big I Westchester
Immediate Past President



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A big honor at the Big I

Travelers is proud to sponsor the Big I Westchester's 2026 Annual Education Day. Congratulations to this year's Dayton Award winner. We also congratulate our insurance industry colleagues who are recipients of the Top Partner Awards.

10:30 A.M.

NAVIGATING THE CURRENT MARKET FROM A WHOLESALER PERSPECTIVE

Panelists:

Erin Burns, Director – CRC Specialty
INSUREtrust Group

Steve Levin, VP, Northeast Region – Risk
Placement Services (RPS)

Sean McVicker, President – XS Brokers

Moderator:

Lisa Lounsbury, President & CEO – Big I New York

11:30 - 1:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION

11:30 - 12:45 P.M.

EXHIBIT HALL OPENS

**Networking and Hors D'oeuvres
in the Exhibit Hall**

1:00 P.M.

LUNCHEON & GREETINGS

Carl Ranieri, ARM, CRIS
Vice President, Big I Westchester

GEORGE GOODMAN'S ANNUAL TOP 10

George Goodman CPCU
Past President

NAVIGATING THE CURRENT MARKET FROM A CARRIER PERSPECTIVE

Panelists:

Elizabeth Heck, Chairman, President & CEO –
Greater New York Insurance Companies

Jeremy Robinson, Senior Vice President – NYCM

Kristen H. Martin, President & CEO – Utica Mutual
Insurance Company

Moderator:

Lisa Lounsbury, President & CEO Big I New York

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Top Partner Awards Presented By:
Glenn Binday

Immediate Past President, Big I Westchester
VP, Commercial Lines – NY Region Cross Agency

2026 Frederick H. Dayton Award

Presenter:

Neil Bush, VP, Personal Lines
Allan M. Block Agency
2025 Dayton Award Recipient

Recipient

Ken Fuirst, Co-President
Levitt-Fuirst Insurance & Bonding

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Closing Remarks

Carl Ranieri, ARM, CRIS

2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall with Cocktail Hour,
Networking, Grand Prize & 50/50

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Navigating the Current Market from a Wholesaler Perspective



ERIN BURNS, MLIS

Director
CRC Specialty
INSUREtrust Group

Erin joined INSUREtrust as an Executive Vice President in 2019. She is now a Director in the Cyber Practice focusing on sales and production for INSUREtrust's cyber and technology retail clients. Erin helps to ensure INSUREtrust's products, services and solutions stay ahead of the market and competition. She is passionate about investing in the future talent of the industry and spends time at college recruiting fairs focusing on risk management majors.

Erin has over 20 years of experience in the insurance industry specializing as a broker for cyber, technology, and professional liability coverages. She began her insurance career as a FINPRO broker at Marsh USA, Inc. followed by leading the Cyber Practice for RCM&D, Inc.

Prior to joining INSUREtrust, Erin was a National Practice Advisor in the USI Executive and Professional Solutions Practice.

Erin holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance with a concentration in Risk Management and Insurance from Virginia Commonwealth University (magna cum laude) and received her Management Liability Insurance Specialist (MLIS) designation in April of 2013. She resides in Richmond, Virginia.



STEVE E. LEVIN

Vice President
Northeast Region
RPS

Since 2015, Steve E. Levin has served as Vice President of the Northeast Region where he oversees eight profit centers and 16 locations.

Prior to his current role, Steve was the Branch Manager of RPS Uniondale, where he and his team tripled the branch's overall premium and revenue in a four-year time span. He helped recruit new producers and was involved in getting several scratch offices off the ground.

Before joining RPS, Steve was Senior Vice President at AON, where he managed the sales and marketing of the Travel Agents/Tour Operators Professional Liability program, and was very involved in its overall growth.

Steve has been recognized as Man of the Year by UJA Long Island Chapter and is a recipient of RPS's David E. McGurn Founder's Award for significant contributions to the growth of the firm. He is an active supporter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

Steve holds a BA in Economics from the State University of New York at Albany.





SEAN MCVICKER

President
XS Brokers

Sean serves as President of XS Brokers. As President, he leads the company's strategic direction, strengthens carrier partnerships, and cultivates an environment where the industry's top wholesale talent can thrive. A broker himself, he brings a practitioner's mindset to leadership — hands-on, collaborative, and relentlessly focused on execution, culture, and client service.

Sean grew up in Westchester, New York where he attended Fordham Prep before earning his undergraduate degree from Boston College. Sports were a formative part of his early life, a passion that shaped his approach to leadership today.

Sean began his insurance career in Liberty Mutual's Underwriting Training Program, where he was introduced to the E&S market — a space he immediately felt drawn to for its pace, complexity, and entrepreneurial energy. He joined a small E&S carrier early in his career, working alongside seasoned professionals who helped shape his technical foundation. Along the way he earned his CPCU designation and completed his MBA at Boston University.

In 2015, he joined XS Brokers, drawn to the company's culture and leadership. "I would have signed up to work for Adam no matter the industry," he reflects. "That feeling has only grown in the past ten years." Starting out as a Casualty Broker, he formally launched the firm's Brokerage Department in 2018, building his own book of business while growing the department's national presence and carrier relationships. He assumed national oversight of XS Brokers' Brokerage Property & Casualty division in 2022 and joined the firm's Executive Committee the same year.

Now, as President, his vision is to build and protect the premier platform for top-tier wholesale talent to choose; a privately owned firm where high standards are the norm, execution is expected, and the right people are given the space to thrive.

He lives in Massachusetts with his wife, Juli, and their four children. "When I'm not working, it's all about my family," he says. "There's no list of hobbies. I'm at the rink, the field, or just soaking in every moment. I feel incredibly lucky to work at a company that lets me grow alongside such exceptional people professionally, while still being present for all the things that matter most at home."



Navigating the Current Market from a Carrier Perspective



ELIZABETH HECK

Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer
Greater New York
Insurance Companies

Elizabeth Heck is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Greater New York Insurance Companies. Ms. Heck first joined GNY in 2001 and served as its Chief Financial Officer before being named President in August 2010. She assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer January 2015 and Chairman of the Board March 2020. Prior to joining GNY, Ms. Heck served in senior financial roles at two large national carriers after beginning her career at EY.

Ms. Heck earned a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Finance from Franklin & Marshall College. She also completed executive training at the Wharton School of Business and holds both CPCU and CPA designations. She is a current member of the US Department of Treasury's Advisory Committee on Risk Sharing Mechanisms and has served on the Boards of several insurance industry associations, including the Insurance Brokers Association of New York, New York Insurance Association (past Chair), American Society of Workers' Compensation Professionals (past Chair), New York Compensation Insurance Rating Board (past Chair), and the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (past Chair).

She has been recognized for her contributions to the insurance industry by the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies with its service award (2026), the New York Insurance Association with its Chair's Distinguished Service Award (2022), the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation with its Vision of Hope Award (2021), the Insurance Brokers Association of New York as its Professional of the Year (2018), the American Society of Workers Compensation Professionals with its Legends Award (2017), the NYC Association of Insurance Women as its Insurance Professional of the Year (2016), the State of Israel Bonds with its Neil Levin Memorial Government Service Award (2013), the Insurance Networking News with its Women in Insurance Leadership Award (2013), and by the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation as its Corporate Partner of the Year (2013).



JEREMY J. ROBINSON

Chief Operating Officer &
Executive Vice President
NYCM Insurance

Jeremy currently serves as Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of NYCM Insurance where he has dedicated 28 years to the organization. In this role, he is responsible for organizational strategic planning and provides direct oversight of the Claims and Customer Relations divisions.

Jeremy is actively involved in his community and serves on several boards including the NYCM Foundation, Otsego County Chamber Board, Edmeston Central School Board of Education, ECS Booster Club, and the LeMoyne College McNeil Institute Advisory Board. He also serves as a volunteer firefighter with the Edmeston Fire Department.

Outside of work and community involvement, Jeremy enjoys spending time with his family, being outdoors, snowmobiling, traveling, and attending high school sporting events. He and his wife, Tasha, of 27 years and are proud parents of four children: Parker, 25; Maeve, 20; Sophie, 17; and Sawyer, 15.



KRISTEN H. MARTIN

President and
Chief Executive Officer
Utica Mutual Insurance
Company

Ms. Martin was named President and Chief Executive Officer in 2024, having previously served as President and Chief Operating Officer since 2019. She was also elected to the position of Director of the Utica Mutual Insurance Company, Graphic Arts Mutual Insurance Company and Republic-Franklin Insurance Company in 2019.

She joined Utica National as an Examiner in 2001 and, following several promotions, was named Corporate Secretary in 2013, Executive Vice President in 2013, and Director of Underwriting Operations in 2014. She was named Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer in 2016.

Ms. Martin holds a juris doctorate from Albany Law School, a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Government from St. Lawrence University, and the Associate in Claims (AIC) professional designation.

She has been active with the United Way campaign, and has served on the Parent Teacher Association of the Clinton (New York) Central School District, as a Member of the school's Sports Boosters, and as a Child Volunteer Protection Advocate Board Member of the American Youth Soccer Organization. She is a Laurentians Investing in Networking and Careers (LINC) mentor for St. Lawrence University and a member of its Parents Committee. She is also on the McNeil Academy Advisory Board of LeMoyne College and is a member of the Campaign Steering Committee of the Mohawk Valley Health System. Kristen was elected to the New York Insurance Association's Board of Directors in 2020.

In 2017, Kristen served as the Go Red Chairwoman for the American Heart Association – Mohawk Valley. As part of her involvement, she committed to raising awareness about heart disease with Utica National employees and to raise funds for the American Heart Association.



LISA K. LOUNSBURY, CAE, AAI, AIS

President and CEO
Big I New York
Moderator

Lisa Lounsbury, CAE, AAI, AIS, is the President and CEO of Big I New York and President of Big I Connecticut, trade associations supporting the success of independent insurance agents in both states. She also co-founded and serves as President of the Board for Catalyit, a company that helps insurance agents understand and implement technology.

Prior to joining Big I New York, she held roles at Great American Insurance Company, where she advanced commercial lines, specialty lines and technology integration initiatives.

Lisa has served on many industry and community boards during her career. Currently she serves on the Northeast Board of the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF), the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA) Diversity Council and the Le Moyne College McNeil Academy Advisory Board.

She was honored to receive the 2025 LeMoyne College Risk Management and Insurance Industry Leader of the Year Award.

A finance graduate of Miami University of Ohio, Lisa resides in Cazenovia, NY, with her husband, two children and assortment of pets.





TOP PARTNER CHAIRPERSON GLENN BINDAY

Glenn Bindow was practically born into the insurance business. Son of Advocate Brokerage founders Rosalyn and Ronald Bindow, Glenn entered the insurance business over thirty-five years ago after graduating from Vassar College with a degree in Economics. Glenn is a Principal of Advocate Brokerage and Director of its Commercial Lines Insurance Department.

Glenn began his insurance career with Aetna Inc. as a Personal Lines agent in White Plains. Glenn attended the Aetna Academy in Hartford, Conn., learning both the Personal Lines and Commercial Lines businesses.

Upon joining Advocate Brokerage in 1989, Glenn transitioned to Commercial Lines. Serving a wide variety of businesses, his specialties include Real Estate and Hospitality, as well as Manufacturing, Distribution, Retail, and Technology.

Glenn is a native of Scarsdale. He is very active in the local community, donating his time as President and a firefighter with Scarsdale Volunteer Fire Co. No. 3, where he has served as a volunteer since 2002. Glenn sits on the Executive Board of IANY, the Board of Directors of Steve's Camp at Horizon Farms, and is currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the Big I Westchester. He is a past board member of the UJA Westchester Business & Professional Division.



DAYTON AWARD CHAIRPERSON NEIL BUSH

Neil Bush is Vice President of Personal Lines at Allan M Block Insurance. He holds his AAI designation. Neil served on the Board of Big I Westchester for many years, serving as the Chair of the IIAWC Volunteer Firefighters Scholarship Committee as well as the Chair of the Big I Westchester Golf Outing.

He is a current member of the Elmsford Rotary Club, where he has served as president and has earned a Paul Harris award for service to the community. He supports the local Chambers of Commerce and HGAR. He serves on the Golf Outing Committee for the Rivertowns Chamber. Previously, Neil organized and managed a 9 hole after-work golf league.

Neil previously served as a Cub Scout Pack Master for 2 years, he coached little league baseball in Tarrytown-Sleepy Hollow for 7 years and served as a US Swim Stroke and Turn official, participating in Junior Olympics and other championship meets. Neil graduated from Somers High School and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics from the University of Delaware. Neil lives in Elmsford, NY with his wife Marguerite. His son David lives in Maryland, with his wife Elise.







2026 Frederick H. Dayton Award



KEN FURST

Co-President
Levitt-Furst Insurance & Bonding

Ken earned a BS in Finance from Lehigh University, an MBA from Columbia Business School and a CLU and CAP from the College of Insurance. He had worked for Fortune 100 companies, International Paper and Johnson & Johnson in NY, Memphis, Dallas and Philadelphia before joining Levitt-Furst in 1993.

Levitt-Furst was founded by V. David Levitt and Alan Furst (Ken's father) in 1968. Ken joined the firm and immediately started marketing the company's expertise in the construction and real estate industries. Ken is co-president with Jason Schiciano and since 1993 when this new generation first joined LF, the firm has quadrupled in size and now has over 70 employees.

Ken lives in Chappaqua, NY with his wife Sue and has 3 children. He became a first time Grandfather in July.



Frederick H. Dayton Award Winners

- 1974 George M. Homer
- 1975 Joseph Stein
- 1976 Morton S. Seidenstein
- 1977 Kenneth Metz
- 1978 Robert Colwell
- 1979 Robert Streger
- 1980 Peter R. Mazzille
- 1981 John Reilly, CPCU
- 1982 Edward McLoughlin
- 1983 John J. Faley, Jr.
- 1984 William Spain, CPCU
- 1985 Brad Clark
- 1986 Francis Patrick Tobin, Jr.
- 1987 Marshall T. Corey, CPCU, CLU
- 1988 James B. Gilman
- 1989 David B. Rosen
- 1990 Norma D. Homer
- 1991 Vincent A. Dunn, AAI
- 1992 John M. Coughlin
- 1993 Thomas J. Dietz, CPCU
- 1994 Richard A. Flynn
- 1995 Edward Groner
- 1996 Andrew T. Robinson, CPCU
- 1997 Lloyd Bedford Cox
- 1998 Edward H. Dwyer
- 1999 Bruno F. Zaffino, Jr., CPCU
- 2000 Clifton Rosenberry
- 2001 Nancy J. Rehm
- 2002 Richard Canter, CPCU, AAI
- 2003 Thomas M. Sternberg, CIC
- 2004 Brian Wallach
- 2005 William Cooper Colwell
- 2006 Gary J. Forbes, CIC
- 2007 George L. Goodman, CPCU
- 2008 Paul D. Ranieri, CPCU
- 2009 JoAnne Murray, CIC
- 2010 Eugene R. Fulton, III
- 2011 Sara J. Rosen
- 2012 R. Todd Rockefeller
- 2013 Nancy Morrell McClatchie
- 2014 Michael Coughlin
- 2015 John J. Cofini
- 2016 Margaret Black
- 2017 Brian M. Colby
- 2018 Robbie Davis
- 2019 Stephen B. Rosen
- 2020 Paul G. Sohigian, CIC
- 2021 Robert J. Kestenbaum
- 2022 Beth S. Hoffman, MS.T, CPCU, AAI
- 2023 Rhonda Jacobius
- 2024 Christopher T. McEvily, CPCU
- 2025 Neil Bush
- 2026 Ken Fuirst



Top Partner Award

- 1981 The Hartford Insurance Company
HM: Travelers Insurance Company
- 1981 Home Insurance Company
HM: Transamerica Insurance Company
- 1982 General Accident
HM: Transamerica Insurance Company
HM: Travelers Insurance Company
- 1983 USF&G
- 1986 Aetna Life & Casualty
- 1987 Aetna Life & Casualty
- 1988 The Hartford Insurance Company
HM: Royal Insurance Company
- 1989 Aetna Life & Casualty
- 1990 Royal Insurance Company
- 1991 Commercial Union
- 1992 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
- 1993 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
- 1994 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Royal Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
HM: Travelers Insurance
- 1995 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Travelers Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
HM: ITT Hartford
- 1996 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Royal Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
HM: CNA
- 1997 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Royal Insurance
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
HM: Travelers Property Casualty
- 1998 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Property Casualty Corp.
Commercial Lines: Commercial Union
HM: Travelers Property Casualty Corp.
- 1999 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Royal Insurance
Commercial Lines: CGU
HM: Travelers Property Casualty
- 2000 Personal Lines: Royal & SunAlliance
HM: CGU
Commercial Lines: CGU
HM: Travelers Insurance
- 2001 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Royal & SunAlliance
Commercial Lines: CGU
HM: Travelers Property
- 2002 Personal Lines: Chubb Insurance
HM: Travelers
Commercial Lines: Harleysville Group
HM: Chubb Insurance
- 2003 Personal Lines: Chubb & Son
HM: Royal & SunAlliance
Commercial Lines: Travelers
HM: Chubb & Son
- 2004 Personal Lines: Chubb & Son
HM: Travelers
Commercial Lines: Harleysville Group
HM: The Hartford
- 2005 Personal Lines: Chubb & Son
2nd Place: Travelers
Commercial Lines: National Grange
2nd Place: Chubb & Son
- 2006 Personal Lines: Chubb
2nd Place: St. Paul Travelers
Commercial Lines: The Hartford
2nd Place: Travelers
- 2007 Personal Lines (National): Travelers
Commercial Lines (National): The Hartford
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Utica First
- 2008 Personal Lines (National): Travelers
Commercial Lines (National): Travelers
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2009 Personal Lines (National): Travelers
Commercial Lines (National): Travelers
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2010 Personal Lines (National): Travelers
Commercial Lines (National): Travelers
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2011 Personal Lines (National): Chubb
Commercial Lines (National): Chubb
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2012 Personal Lines (National): Chubb
Commercial Lines (National): Travelers
Personal Lines (Regional): Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2013 Top Partner Commercial Lines
Underwriting – The Hartford
Top Partner Commercial Lines
Best Agency Partnership – Travelers
Top Partner Commercial Lines
Best Claims Service – Chubb
Top Partner Personal Lines
Underwriting – Chubb
Top Partner Personal Lines
Best Claims Service – Chubb
Top Partner Personal Lines
Best Agency Partnership – Chubb



- 2014 Personal Lines (National): Chubb
Commercial Lines (National) The Hartford
Personal Lines (Regional): The Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2015 Personal Lines (National): Chubb
Commercial Lines (National) The Hartford
Personal Lines (Regional): The Adirondack
Commercial Lines (Regional): Harleysville
- 2016 Personal Lines National – Chubb
Commercial Lines National – The Hartford
Personal Lines Regional – Adirondack
Insurance Exchange
Regional Lines Commercial – Merchants
Insurance Group
- 2018 Personal Lines National – Chubb
Commercial Lines National – The Hartford
Personal Lines Regional – New York
Central Mutual
Commercial Lines Regional – Selective
Insurance Company
- 2019 Personal Lines National – Chubb
Commercial Lines National – The Hartford
Personal Lines Regional – Adirondack
Insurance
Commercial Lines Regional – Selective
Insurance Company
- 2020 Personal Lines National - Chubb
Commercial Lines National - Travelers
Personal Lines Regional - The Hanover
Insurance Group
Commercial Lines Regional - Selective Insurance Co.

- 2021 Personal Lines National - Chubb
Commercial Lines National - The Hartford
Personal Lines Regional - Utica National
-Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National
- 2022 Personal Lines National - Cincinnati
Insurance Company
Commercial Lines National - Travelers
Personal Lines Regional - New York Central Mutual
Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National
- 2023 Personal Lines National - Cincinnati
Insurance Company
Commercial Lines National - Travelers
Personal Lines Regional - New York Central Mutual
Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National
- 2024 Personal Lines National - Chubb
Commercial Lines National - Chubb
Personal Lines Regional - New York Central Mutual
Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National
- 2025 Personal Lines National - Chubb
Commercial Lines National - Travelers
Personal Lines Regional - The Hanover
Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National
- 2026 Personal Lines National - Chubb
Commercial Lines National - Travelers
Personal Lines Regional - The Andover Companies
Commercial Lines Regional - Utica National



Exhibitors

WE THANK OUR EXHIBITORS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUCCESS OF E-DAY.

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Tom Avezzano
All Pro Cleaning & Restoration,
A BELFOR Co.
75 Virginia Road
N. White Plains, NY 10603
Email: tom@allprorestoration.com
Telephone: (914) 592-2849

2

Laura Brockhoff
Applied Underwriters
P.O. Box 3646
Omaha, NE 68103
Email: ljbrockhoff@auw.com
Telephone: (712) 318-0618

20

Alicia Andrijczuk
Berkley Management Protection
433 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06110
Email: aandrijczuk@berkleympr.com
Telephone: (716) 479-8498

13

Jonathan Schwartz
Bridge Specialty Group
1 Penn Plaza, Fl. 6
New York, NY
Email: jschwartz@bridgespecialty.com
Telephone: (802) 661-5476

18

Queenie Gandy
Chubb
1133 Westchester Avenue, Suite 327
White Plains, NY 10604
Email: qgandy@chubb.com
Telephone: (914) 989-6510

3

Rich Alonso
CNA
395 North Service Road
Melville, NY 11747
Email: Richard.Alonso@cna.com
Telephone: (516) 615-0363

1

Tara Hughes
Distinguished Programs
1180 Avenue of the Americas, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10036
Email: thughes@distinguished.com
Telephone: (425) 213-1259

8

Maria Thomas
Friedlander Group
2500 Westchester Avenue, Suite 400A
Purchase, NY 10577
Email: Mariat@friedlandergroup.com
Telephone: (631) 834-9829

15

Annamarie James
Great American Insurance Group
28 Liberty Street, Suite 3610
New York, NY 10005
Email: aljames@gaig.com
Telephone: (212) 513-4020

4

Kate Alben
Jencap
1350 Broadway,
New York, NY 10018
Email: kate.alben@jencapgroup.com
Telephone: (508) 452-9511

19

Milan Kana
Kana Atlantic

49 Main Street
Tarrytown, NY 10591
Email: milan@kanaatlantic.com
Telephone: 716-364-0276

21

Dong He
NYSIF

15 Computer Drive West
Albany, NY 12205
Email: dhe@nysif.com
Telephone: (518)437-4377

9

Rocco Schiaffino
Philadelphia Insurance Companies

68 South Service Road
Melville, NY 11747
Email: Rocco.Schiaffino@phly.com
Telephone: (516) 493-4445

14

Simon Wills
Private Client Select

100 Park Avenue, 26th Floor
New York, NY 1--17
Email: simon.wills@privateclientsselect.com
Telephone: (848) 667-6859

11

Teresa Zimmer
RT Specialty

6467 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221
Email: teresa.zimmer@rtspecialty.com
Telephone: (718) 856-3065, ext. 34865

5

Joseph McGuiness
Selective Insurance Group

40 Wantage Avenue
Branchville, NJ 07890
Email: Joseph.McGuiness@selective.com
Telephone: (973) 948-1506

17

Frank Taormina
ShelterPoint Life

1225 Franklin Avenue, Suite 475
Garden City, NY 11530
Email: Ftaormina@shelterpoint.com
Telephone: (800) 365-4999

16

Kristen DeMarco
Utica National

180 Genesee Street
New Hartford, NY 13413
Email: Kristen.DeMarco@uticanational.com
Telephone: (800) 598-8422

12

Scott Cowan
Vertafore

999 18th Street, Suite 400N
Denver, CO 80202
Email: scowan@vertafore.com
Telephone: (610) 637-6440

6

Martin Sather
Warner Pacific

311 Clock Tower Commons Drive, Suite 311
Brewster, NY 10509
Email: Martin.Sather@warnerpacific.com
Telephone: (914) 801-3438

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Peter Buccinna
XS Brokers

One Liberty Plaza
New York, NY 10006
Email: PBUCCINNA@XSBROKERS.COM
Telephone: (518) 567-5645



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Installation of the 2026-2027 Big I Westchester Officers & Directors

OFFICERS

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Carl Ranieri, ARM, CRIS
D.C. Ranieri Insurance Agency

VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Milano
The Cross Agency

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Janine M. Andros, CLCS
NFP Property & Casualty Services, Inc.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Glenn Binday
The Cross Agency - Scarsdale

DIRECTORS

Adam Antoinette
Levitt-Fuirst Associates Ltd.

Brian H. Eifert, CPCU, AAI, RMPE
The Cross Agency

Laura Murray-Faggella
Allan M. Block Agency, Inc.

Cameron Gilbert
George A. Bell & Son, Inc.

Laura Rey Iannarelli
The Rey Insurance Agency

Chris Januski
JWI Group, Inc.

Michael McEvily, CPCU
Acrisure

John W. Riley
Alliant Insurance Services, Inc.

Will Stofka
IMA





BIG I WESTCHESTER

Annual Holiday Networking Reception

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2026
6:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Captain Lawrence Brewing Company
444 Saw Mill River Road
Elmsford, NY

REGISTER AT
IIAWESTCHESTER.ORG

IIAWC Volunteer Firefighters Scholarship Fund

The Big I Westchester established a scholarship fund in 2006 for children of Westchester County Volunteer firefighters, EMTs, first responders and/or junior firefighters/explorers who live or work in Westchester County. This was done in memory of fellow Independent Insurance Agent Robert Schnibbe, a Volunteer Fire Battalion Chief who passed away while at the scene of a house fire. Since 2006, we have awarded \$72,250.00 in scholarships.

The foundation is supported by donations from Big I Westchester members and volunteer firefighters throughout Westchester County.

This year we are pleased to present (2) scholarships in the amount of \$1,500.00 each to **Alexander Palacio** of Katonah and **Carlin McKinnon** of Hastings on Hudson.

CARLIN MCKINNON

As a graduating senior looking back at my experiences in the Westchester community, I am beyond grateful to have called this place my home. I have been able to contribute to my school community and Hastings at large because I have felt such a deep connection to the people I've met. I've lived in Hastings for over 13 years with my two younger sisters, parents, and dog Scout. Through my family, I've been instilled with certain values that have impacted the ways in which I choose to contribute to my community, and therefore, to myself. In general, I've enjoyed becoming a part of multiple communities within Hastings, whether that be the field hockey program, the theater department, the Peer Leadership program, Girl Scouts, the Student Union, or the school choir. I find immense joy in being a part of these groups and helping others find a similar level of joy in comfort in these activities as I do.

For instance, I have been a part of the Hastings field hockey program since eighth grade. I was a captain both my junior and senior years and I have been honored with awards for my athletic talents. However, while the under-the-lights Homecoming games and late-night ice cream runs were enjoyable, I found the most fulfillment through the connections I helped foster on and off the field, with my coaches and my fellow teammates. During pre-season, I talked with every JV player about their summers and feelings surrounding entering high school. I enjoyed scheduling team bonding activities, such as a pasta dinner at the local fire station, for my team, but I also made sure to include JV during preseason bagel runs or group chats. In other words, I tried to engage with my teammates and the underclassmen in individual conversations to help them feel seen in the way that I felt and through this, I found an immense joy and sense of purpose.

Aside from sports, I have a great passion for theater. Most recently I played the role of Sandy in my high school's production of Grease. I've had a deep love for theater ever since I was six years old. My favorite activity is going to see a theater performance, or even better, getting to perform in one myself. The people in the theater community have shaped me into the person I am today and the ability of theater to portray human stories is something I will never take for granted. I love the process of putting a show together because it is truly a group effort and I believe that in order to reach the best

HOW MY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HAS AFFECTED MY LIFE

ALEXANDER PALACIO

When I first joined the fire department, I wondered if my life would change in any way. Almost immediately I found the joy of helping others in my community. Seeing the looks on people's faces during the carnival and other events takes me back to being a kid in this community. It never occurred to me how important this work is until I became a part of it. Being a part of the department has allowed me to give back to a community that supported me my entire life.

I find similar purpose in my work in Appalachia through the Appalachia Service Project. ASP is an organization that provides home improvements for our nation's most impoverished region, the Appalachian Mountain region. Although it is not the community that I have been a part of my entire life, serving it brings a similar pride to me. The people of Appalachia are just as kind as those of Katonah and elsewhere. Being able to help people by making their homes safer just like I am doing for my community back home, is incredibly important to me. Although I am not serving that community in the same way I do here, it does not change the effect it has had on me.

The most important thing about community service is the ability to give back to my community. Throughout the years I have seen the great parts of my community, and I have continued to see even greater things while I am serving. I have seen kindness in the donations towards my service group and the thanks I have received for being a firefighter. These people and their acts are the reason I continue to serve the community.

Much of my free time is spent in service. My weekends are taken up by community events and fundraisers. I spend weeks away from home working on home. I drop many things I am doing when I hear the fire horn. Not once have I ever felt the desire to complain or quit. Community service is as essential to my life as anything else. It provides me with a sense of accomplishment that I can't find in other aspects of my life.

I am thankful to have been given these opportunities to serve. Community service is something that builds communities; people helping others is something so important in times like ours. I can rely on my service as well as the service of others to be there when other things may not be. When the world seems uncertain, it is important that our smaller communities do not. I am grateful to be a part of something that can make someone feel safer, and more secure in their life. I know that my time spent in service will lead me towards great things as I enter a new chapter in my life.

2025 EDAY Photo Gallery







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