

***44th Annual
New Jersey
Women of Achievement
Awards***

May 5, 2025

Sponsored by

New Jersey State Federation of
Women's Clubs of GFWC



and



Douglass Residential College
of Rutgers,
The State University of New Jersey

The New Jersey Women of Achievement Award

The Women of Achievement Award was initiated in 1981 and is co-sponsored by New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC and Douglass College. The Federation and Douglass College have been partners in encouraging women to achieve since 1918, with the opening of the College, the first public institution of higher learning in the State to admit women. First known as the New Jersey College for Women, the college was renamed in 1955 in honor of Mabel Smith Douglass, the dynamic College Chairman of the Federation who became the College's first Dean. Since those days, the largest women's volunteer organization in the State and the only women's residential college in the nation that is part of a public research university have maintained close ties, and are proud to honor New Jersey's Women of Achievement.

2025
Women of Achievement

Lisa J. Hou, D.O.

Major General, Director-Joint Surgeon General
National Guard Bureau, Washington DC

Tyrese Gould Jacinto

President and CEO – Native American
Advancement Corp.

Virginia “Ginnie” Newman Littell

Founder/Chair - Ginnie’s House, Sussex
County Child Advocacy Center;
Chair - St. Clare’s Hospital System

Margaret “Jill” McDonald

Retired RN
Community Volunteer Extraordinaire

Elena Anastasiou Rossi

Board President - NJ Folk Festival
Reunion Chair of Associate Alumnae of
Douglass College (AADC)

Lisa J. Hou, D.O.

Major General, Director – Joint Surgeon General National Guard Bureau, Washington DC

A native New Jerseyan, Lisa is an American physician and Major General proudly serving our Country. She received a BA in Political Science from Bryn Mawr College, a Doctorate in Osteopathic Medicine from the New Jersey University of Medicine and Dentistry, an MBA from Rutgers School of Business (her three sisters did, as well), and a distinguished MSS (Master of Strategic Studies) from the U.S. Army War College.

While researching helicopter pilot training in medical school, a chance opportunity to ride in a NJ Army National Guard "Huey" launched her future. From 1994 to 2023, Lisa rose from Second Lieutenant to Two-Star Major General. Some of her studies included U.S. Army Command-General Staff College, Flight Surgeon Course, Leader Development, National-International Security, and General and Flag Officer Homeland Security.

Lisa completed a General Surgery Internship at St. Barnabas Hospital, Otolaryngology/Facial Plastic Surgery Residency at Union Hospital, and a Sleep Surgery Fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center, CA.

In addition to her service on New Jersey bases in Fort Dix and Sea Girt, she served as Field Surgeon during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM in Iraq and Afghanistan, caring for coalition soldiers, Iraqi civilians, and maintaining readiness for mass casualties. Then she was sole medical provider with a team of combat medics, responsible for six hundred coalition soldiers, contractors, and foreign nationals.

Some of her extensive awards and military honors include Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service, Army Commendation, National Defense Service, Afghanistan and Iraqi Campaigns, Global War on Terrorism Service, Armed Forces Reserve, Army Service and Overseas Service Ribbons, and Flight Surgeon Badge.

As an active member with the VFW and American Legion, Lisa presented a Veterans Affairs Program at the Woman's Club of Brielle, then joined the club. The GFWC Women's History and Resource Center lists her as the first Asian-American/first female Adjutant General in NJ.

Lisa was nominated by the Brielle Woman's Club.

Tyrese Gould Jacinto

President and CEO – Native American Advancement Corp.

A multifaceted woman, Tyrese has a rich tapestry of accomplishments spanning 17 years as the Native American Advancement Corp. President and CEO. She exemplifies complete dedication and leadership by instructing and promoting her Native American heritage, leaving an indelible mark on cultural preservation and environmental stewardship.

Photographer, Educator, Ordained Mystic, and Author of nineteen books, her works centers on a myriad of aspects of Native American culture, spirituality and conservation. She was recognized by the NJ Senate and General Assembly for her work as Educator, Artist, Author, and Business Entrepreneur, by the NJ Council of the Arts as an Indigenous Folk Artist, and by the Boy Scouts of America for her dedication to youth development.

Named a Cumberland County Legend and placed in Marquis Who's Who for outstanding achievements, Tyrese also received the Beyond the Glass Ceiling Award from the National Association of Women Business Owners South Jersey.

Her vision led to creation of the 63-acre Cohanzick Nature Reserve and Longhouse Sanctuary, which embodies her commitment to teach tribal youth and other organizations about sacred and centuries-old Indigenous practices of conservation and crafts on land where her ancestors were born.

Tyrese and her husband Victor own Purépecha Unalachtigo Ranch, where passion for nature and sustainable practices abound.

She is certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR, is a Certified Herbalist, Notary Public, Home Improvement Contractor, Realtor, and has an RRP Lead Safe Firm.

As a member of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Indians of the NJ Citizenship Committee, Tyrese actively participates in the NJ DCA Weatherization Assistance Policy Council, NJDEP Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and NJDEP Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee.

She holds a degree in Computer Science from Seton Hall University and a Certification in Data Processing Programming from Cumberland Technical Center.

The Woman's Club of Vineland and President Mary Wolfe nominated Tyrese as a Woman of Achievement.

Virginia “Ginnie” Newman Littell

**Founder/Chair - Ginnie’s House, Sussex County
Child Advocacy Center; Chair - St. Clare’s Hospital System**

With a “service” heart, Ginnie supports others to be their best, and promotes finest practices in her community of hospitals.

Boston-born/educated, Ginnie was married 50 years to Robert Littell of Franklin NJ; they operated family appliance and propane businesses. She is founder/partner of Brazer & Littell, LLC. Bob served in the NJ Assembly and Senate, following generations of family in government.

With Sussex County GOP 60 years, Ginnie was a National Delegate, second woman elected Republican State Committee Chair, and Northeast Region Vice Chair. She was president of first Walkill area woman’s club, member of ZONTA, UNICO, Franklin Historical Society, NJ Hall of Fame Foundation Member, and Miss NJ Contest Judge, Atlantic City.

A 49-year hospital field volunteer, she chairs three hospitals comprising the St. Clare’s Health System, is Council of Hospital Governance Chair, and NJ Hospital Association Executive member.

On Rutgers Business School Board for 16 years, Ginnie developed the Business of Fashion Program. At Centenary College, she promoted a master’s in healthcare administration/leadership, and raised \$50 million as Capital Campaign Chair to build Lackland Center. Their Technology Building bears the Littell name. She and Bob received Centenary Honorary Doctorates.

At a hospital function, a school superintendent informed Ginnie of a child revealing abuse at home. Ginnie knew what would transpire...police, questioning, hospital exams, prosecutors, courts...often with the abuser present. In 1998, after collaboration with all agencies, “Ginnie’s House” was born. There, a child is treated in one well-equipped, warm, friendly place, gently questioned by agencies on closed-circuit TV, examined by a doctor who collects specimens...all saving the child-victim further trauma and testifying. Services are free for life.

The NJ Institute for Nursing, Garden State Cancer Center, and Boy Scouts of America have recognized Ginnie.

Her son Luke is in the entertainment industry; daughter Alison McHose is a former NJ Assemblywoman. Ginnie is grandmother of five.

She was nominated by Sparta Woman’s Club President Susanna Lee.

Margaret “Jill” McDonald

Retired RN; Community Volunteer Extraordinaire

“Community Volunteer Extraordinaire” is the title given Jill by those who know her. From childhood, Jill experienced volunteerism when joining her mother and grandmother helping Red Creek, NY villagers. Desire to improve the lives of others blossomed in church and Scouts.

Jill received education in the tri-state area and CO. She became a Registered Nurse and married Army careerist Gil. In 1978, he was deployed to Korea. She followed with their three children. Finding no childcare on base, Jill changed that. By their return to NJ in 1981, Korea had five Child Development Centers.

Learning Fort Monmouth military spouses had employment difficulty, Jill developed a job bank, search assistance, and workshops. Her project became the Army’s Employment Readiness Program, expanding to all military branches.

Considered an Army Subject Matter Expert, worldwide colleagues sought her. Jill organized 44 Job Fairs and Summer Youth Programs for volunteer service training for six hundred teens in 16 years.

Jill joined the Woman’s Club of Tinton Falls, presiding 19 years. Later she joined the Woman’s League of Mount Holly. From 2012 to 2024, Jill’s Federation service included chairing ALMANAC, Headquarters, and Honors and Awards; she was Girls’ Career Institute Director, Garden District Vice President, and Assistant to two NJSFWC Presidents, Jan Hanson and Shirley Holly.

At Holiday Village, Jill leads “Blanketeers,” creating blankets and winter wear for school children, veterans, and hospice patients.

A perpetual baker, she holds the sweet “Cookie Lady” title, generously donating to Veterans and countless causes.

Jill earned the prestigious GFWC Jennie Award, NJSFWC Cecilia Gaines Holland Award, is on State Honor Roll, Order of the Lily recipient, plus was honored by the Tinton Falls Business and Professional Association. The McDonalds were named “Fort Monmouth Great American Family.”

Married 57 years, she and Gil have three children and five grandchildren.

Susan Chambers, NJSFWC President-elect, and Dr. Jennie McQuaide nominated Jill as a Woman of Achievement.

Elena Anastasiou Rossi

Board President - NJ Folk Festival; Reunion Chair of Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (AADC)

Elena enriched the lives of countless New Jerseyans as Board President of the NJ Folk Festival at Rutgers University. As a 1978 Douglass College graduate, having earned a B.A. in American Studies/Urban Communications and Pre-School Education, she represented her class as President since graduation, was an active alum for forty years, and faithfully served as Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (AADC) Reunion Chair. Her diligence has ensured the strength of AADC initiatives and programs for generations.

In reunion planning, Elena reached a wider audience in her promotion of innovative ideas and activities, keeping quality high and costs down. Known for her loyalty and generosity of time and talent, Elena's work on the AADC 95th Anniversary Committee and Annual Appeal Committee has been invaluable. In 2017, Elena received the AADC Recognition Award.

Upon creation of the NJ Folk Festival at Rutgers University (NJFF) in 1975, Elena was only one of two students involved in its organization and management under Angus Gillespie. The festival provides attendees educational opportunities and workspace for students to learn leadership and management skills. It brings together students, community, and faculty to feature collaborative research, storytelling, and performances, highlighting contributions of diverse arts and culture in NJ.

NJFF outdoor attendees numbered 10,000, but with the advent of the pandemic, there was a significant drop. Elena helped pivot to online mediums...podcasts and remote feeds of dance, lectures, and performances...to share NJ history, diverse arts and culture, thereby increasing availability to a much greater audience.

Elena is Secretary of Cyprus Children's Fund, Inc. and owner of e-riginals, a floral design company in Union, which also offers catering and event planning.

In addition to her Douglass degree, Elena earned an M.A. in Student Personnel Administration and Higher Education at Columbia University Teachers' College.

She was nominated as a Woman of Achievement by Valerie Anderson, Retired Executive Director, AADC.