

2024



Meet our
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A WOMEN'S CONFERENCE CAREFULLY CURATED BY



+



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Maureen Ballatori
Founder + CEO
Agency 29

Maureen Ballatori is the founder and CEO of Agency 29, an award-winning creative agency for food, beverage, and agriculture brands. Her experience in brand strategy helps companies scale business growth, define their unique marketing message, and attract their ideal audiences. Maureen's rural roots are the source of her passion for agriculture marketing and food. An active community member, Maureen holds multiple board seats for local and international organizations and she is a national speaker and workshop facilitator.

Maureen has been nominated multiple times for community impact awards. She is a graduate of Nazareth University with a degree in Studio Art and has won dozens of international awards for branding and design.

Let's stay in touch!

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Marla Kast
Founder + Consultant
Core Leadership

Maria is a 3x business owner and executive coach who helps executives and teams uncover and change the downhill behaviors that prevent them from leading at their highest level. She is empathetic, emotionally intelligent, a creative problem solver and experienced business owner and coach. In 2019 she developed her CORE proprietary process which teaches an intuitive, yet structured approach for growing yourself, your team and therefore your business by building a connection to the inner coach. This process has provided multiple six-figure results for both her and her clients. Here's what one of her client's has to say: "Maria helped me to reflect on, and become more aware of my functioning as a leader. Through this and her skill at coaching, I was better able to navigate some challenging situations. She's a phenomenal teacher who's engaging and supportive, talented at asking thought-provoking questions, and does a fantastic job at sparking action.

email me!

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Sharon Napier
Executive Chair & Founder
Partners + Napier

Sharon Napier is Executive Chair and Founder of Partners + Napier, the full-service creative and media agency twice ranked among the Top 20 Most Effective Agencies in North America by Effie Worldwide. Board Chair of the 4A's - and one of Ad Age's 100 Most Influential Women in Advertising - Sharon is a trusted voice in the industry. Featured in publications including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Ad Age, and Forbes, Sharon is also a sought-after thought leader. Whether presenting at the Ad Age Small Agency Conference or in Cannes, it's clear why Sharon has earned numerous trailblazer awards.

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Toi Sweeney
CEO & Founder
The Well Dressed Brand Agency
and author of “Secrets of a Well
Dressed Brand”

Toi Sweeney is an award-winning fashion stylist, Certified Brand Strategist from Northwestern/ Kellogg’s, TEDx speaker, entrepreneur and Best-selling author of *Secrets of a Well Dressed Brand, As*, the founder of The Well Dressed Brand, and host of The Well Dressed Brand TV show. Toi helps powerhouse brands and high-performers integrate their wardrobes into their business plans through a stunning, distinctive style that clearly communicates their highest value. She’s passionate about leveraging her Fascination Advantage™ training and the psychology of color to develop signature styles for her clients that help them show up and shut it down. Toi has been featured on Forbes.com, BBCNews.com, HelloGiggles.com, and has appeared as a guest on over a dozen podcasts. She has two decades of extensive experience in fashion, business, and marketing, and her clients have appeared on The Today Show, Harry, Fox, ABC, NBC, QVC, The Hallmark Channel, The Drew Barrymore Show. Toi is also a recipient of the prestigious Telly Award and a recipient of the Icon of the Year award via the Art Institute.

hit me up!

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Storyteller, coach and mojo booster - that's Andrea Holland. For over 20 years, Andrea has worked to tell the stories of some pretty amazing people - and, now - as a coach - she helps others learn to confidently tell their own stories. From London to L.A., and Brazil to Toronto, Andrea serves clients across the map...and she loves every second of it. Her Rochester roots are strong, though. Andrea is a mom to a very chatty 2-year-old, an avid community volunteer - holding 3 leadership roles on nonprofit boards, a 12-year member of EstroFest comedy troupe, and a BIG fan of her BIG Puerto Rican family. Her call to action for women everywhere is simply this: Dare to Find Your Voice.

Andrea Holland
Executive Communications
Coach & Consultant
Holland Communications, LLC

stay connected!

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Sydney Bell
Manager, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion,
ESL Federal Credit Union

Sydney E. Bell (she/her) is the Manager of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) at ESL Federal Credit Union where she leads DEI programming and education, and supports overall DEI strategy efforts.

Sydney is an adjunct professor of DEI at Nazareth University and Course Developer with RITCertified. She serves as a Co-chair of the Friends of 540 group with 540WMain, Inc., and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors at the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley.

Sydney holds a Master's degree in Human Resource Development from Nazareth University and eCornell's DEI Certificate. She is a certified antiracism facilitator through 540WMain, Inc., and is a SafeZone certified trainer through the SafeZone Initiative.



Agathi Georgiou-Graham
Founder/Owner
Arbor Venues

Agathi Georgiou Graham is a trailblazer not only in the Rochester wedding scene, but in what it takes to create spaces for young women to thrive. She turned her boutique event planning business into a seven-figure women-owned and run empire, consisting of three event venues (Arbor Loft, Arbor at the Port, and Arbor Midtown), two catering companies (Folk, Fare) and the small business that started it all, Agathi & Co. Agathi has consistently dedicated herself to giving women a space to shine in the male-dominated hospitality industry to deliver top-notch service to thousands of brides, nonprofit organizations, and businesses around Rochester. Agathi's contributions to the community go far beyond her capabilities at Arbor Venues. She has recognized her resources and poured them into the two things she loves most in the world: her Greek family and culture, and her late dog Bruno. Agathi gives back to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church through her work on the pro-bono renovation of their church hall into the event space 962 East, and by planning of the church's annual Greek Festival. Agathi began the nonprofit organization Bruno's Blessings in collaboration with Rochester Hope for Pets, providing families with the financial ability to nurse their senior dogs back to health.



Melissa Mueller-Douglas, LMSW
CEO,
MYRetreat Inc.

Melissa Mueller-Douglas is a dynamic leader bridging the wellness and chocolate industries, through the MYRetreat App. With a background in social work, she brings a combined 12 years of experience, inspiring groups with wellness workshops and Chocolate Mindfulness™ (team building using chocolate not trust falls). She's a firm believer in the power of habit stacking, using chocolate as a reward for prioritizing wellness. Let's connect, learn, and grow together at the Women Empowering Women Conference!

stay connected!

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Michelle Schleher
President & CEO
AAC Contracting, LLC

With over 26 years of experience in the construction field, Michelle Schleher stepped into her role as President & CEO of AAC Contracting in January 2022. Headquartered in Rochester, AAC performs abatement, demolition, firestopping & fireproofing services across NY State. She and her team celebrated 40 years in business in 2023 and is honored to be Rochester's premier environmental remediation contractor. Under her leadership, Michelle and her team have accomplished earning a place on ENR's (Engineering News Record) Top 20 Asbestos Contractors in the US, placing #7 on the Rochester Chamber's Top 100 and is the #1 Environmental Service Provider on RBJ's Book of Lists.

Michelle is proud to have achieved certification for AAC in the last 2 years as a WOSB (Women Owned Small Business), a WBENC (Women Business Enterprise National Council) business and a NYS WBE (Women Business Enterprise). Within the community Michelle is a member of NAWIC, CREW, Rochester Women's Council, is the co-chair for the annual Young Women of Distinction event, sits on the gala committee for Make-a-Wish, is an adjunct professor at RIT, a mentor in the Chamber of Commerce CLIMB program, and was recently named a finalist for the 2024 ATHENA awards.

Outside of work, Michelle enjoys spending time with her family boating, kayaking & paddle boarding on the St. Lawrence River.

stay connected!

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Erin Tolefree
President & CEO
Baldwin Richardson Foods

Erin Tolefree is President and CEO of Baldwin Richardson Foods (BRF), a leading custom ingredients manufacturer of sauces, syrups, toppings and fillings for the food and beverage industry. BRF, a multi-generational, family-owned company, has forged strategic relationships with some of the world's largest food companies across Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG), Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) and Food Service clients. With four locations across Illinois, New York and California, Baldwin Richardson Foods employs over 500 people.

During Erin's tenure as President, she has led the company through a period of significant growth with a vision to lead the industry with excellence and flavorful innovations that delight the world and enable Baldwin Richardson Foods to make a positive impact on the lives of its people, partners and community.

In 2021, Erin spearheaded BRF's partnership with the Rochester Area Community Foundation and U3 Advisors to launch the Rochester Procurement Equity Project, a multi-year effort to close the racial disparity gap by leveraging the impact of corporate and institutional procurement dollars within communities of color in Rochester.

Erin lives in Rochester with her husband, Truman, and their three children.

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Natalie Grigg
Experience Supervising Partner
Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP

Natalie A. Grigg is a Partner at Woods Oviatt Gilman, LLP, and Founder of Prismera Solutions, a wellness and diversity consulting company. Natalie's experience in well-being comes from her career in law, personal experience, leadership, and education. Natalie has dedicated herself to understanding and promoting the healing potential of mindfulness, yoga, and energy work, recognizing their profound impact on mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Driven by the belief that wellness and diversity are intertwined pillars of a thriving organization, Natalie works to empower individuals and organizations by inspiring positive change, fostering inclusive cultures, and empowering individuals to embrace wellness as an integral part of their lives.

Natalie is an active community volunteer, and has sat on the Board of Directors for Dress for Success Rochester, and is a member of the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys ("GRAWA") and Monroe County Bar Association, where she has taught yoga as part of the Health and Wellness Committee. At a national level, Natalie has served as a Board Member of the American Legal and Financial Network (ALFN) since 2016.

stay connected!

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Krystle Ellis
Founder and Chief Culture Analyst
Ellis K. Consulting

Bold is the best way to describe Krystle Ellis. Ellis is a multidimensional powerhouse, owner of Ellis K Consulting, and Interim Executive Director of the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley. Known as "The Culture Broker", Ellis specializes in catapulting businesses in varying industries to the next level by implementing system-wide change methods through a positive and appreciative lens, while simultaneously being able to locate operational threats and challenges serving as a barrier to success and profitability.

Krystle stands as a unique leader in the areas of policy remapping, professional development, conflict mediation, and operational support. She has a proven track record of successfully navigating the complexities of organizational restructuring, while still prioritizing inclusivity and fairness. Regarded as a mastermind and chief strategist, Krystle's distinctive ability to deliver tangible and meaningful change stands as a testament to her empathy and unwavering commitment to her community.

She sits on multiple boards and has been featured in national publications because of her work as a diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioner. Krystle is a philanthropist and founding member of the Rochester Institute of Technology Sentinel Giving Society. She firmly advocates for the rights of women and providing equitable access to healthcare for children.

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