

The logo for NYWICI, with 'NY' in white and 'WICI' in pink.

THE 56TH ANNUAL
MATRIX AWARDS

A large, detailed blue butterfly with white markings on its wings, positioned to the right of the main title.

**THE
BUTTERFLY
EFFECT**

**Women Who Transform the World
and Inspire the Future**

MAY 19, 2026



NYWICI

THE
**BUTTERFLY
EFFECT**

**Women Who Transform the World
and Inspire the Future**

THE 56TH ANNUAL
MATRIX AWARDS

**Honoring women who have defined the true meaning
of metamorphosis... they've embraced challenges,
reinvented themselves, and evolved into leaders
whose success has created a butterfly effect
—rippling across our industry.**



THE 56TH ANNUAL
MATRIX AWARDS

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CONGRATULATIONS

DEBRA O'CONNELL

CHAIRMAN, DISNEY ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION



NYWICI 2026 MATRIX HONOREE

Your leadership, expertise and vision inspire your team and colleagues,
and serve as a benchmark for excellence across our industry.





NYWICI

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1929, New York Women in Communications (NYWICI) is the premier organization for female communications professionals. Today, the 97-year-old not-for-profit association has more than 2,500 members, from senior executives to students and entrepreneurs to young professionals, in a variety of communications disciplines, including journalism, broadcasting, corporate communications, digital, publishing, advertising, integrated marketing, photography, public relations, graphic design, and more.

NYWICI's mission is to empower women in the communications field at every career stage to reach their full potential and navigate the ever-changing landscape of communications. We promote professional growth and inspire members to achieve and share success by actively encouraging leadership and professional development, as well as providing networking opportunities that connect women who connect the world.

Over the last 56 years, NYWICI has honored the industry's most outstanding leaders and celebrated all the courageous women that have come before them and those that will come after with the Matrix Awards. Since 1971, 380 women have received the NYWICI Matrix Award. Each year, we award scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to high school seniors, college and graduate students, and offer educational programs, including a Communications Career Bootcamp for women beginning their careers or embarking on career transitions. To date, we have awarded more than \$2.2 million in scholarship support to over 410 women. As women who connect, create and communicate, NYWICI members serve as role models, career advisors, and mentors.



NYWICI

TRAILBLAZER AWARDS

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026
FORBES ON FIFTH, NYC

Celebrate NYWICI's next generation... the women who helped light the way, in the worlds of communications, marketing, advertising and public relations.

Our Second Class of Trailblazers Honored in September 2025



Talia Bender Small

The Female Quotient

Nominated by



Shelley Zalis

The Female Quotient



Jessica Ling

American Express

Nominated by



Elizabeth Rutledge

American Express



Leah Seay Anise

OpenAI

Nominated by



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Nominated by



Tracy-Ann Lim

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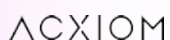
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Interested in sponsoring NYWICI's 2026 Trailblazers Awards – email donna-jean.plante@nywici.org

FROM THE NYWICI PRESIDENT



The butterfly effect reminds us that even the smallest actions can create powerful, lasting change. A single moment of courage, a decision to lead, a willingness to lift someone else, these are the quiet forces that shape careers, communities, and lives. This year's Matrix Awards honorees embody that spirit in extraordinary ways.

Each of our honorees is a catalyst. Some have transformed their own paths—reinventing themselves, breaking barriers, and redefining leadership. Others have created ripple effects far beyond their own success—opening doors, mentoring the next generation, and inspiring others to believe in what's possible. Together, they remind us that true impact is not measured by a single achievement, but by the inspiration we ignite and the momentum we create for others.

For me, this year carries a deeply personal meaning.

I recently lost my mother, Lenore Stoller, who was the most important influence in my life. She was my mentor, my cheerleader, my confidante, and my very best friend. Through every chapter, balancing career and family, navigating uncertainty, celebrating life's milestones, she was the ultimate listener, offering heartfelt advice, and unwavering support through every twist and turn.

What I've come to understand more profoundly in her absence is the extraordinary ripple effect she created. As a leader in education, she didn't just guide students and families—she quietly opened doors, lifted others up, and inspired those around her to lead with both intellect and compassion. Her impact lives on in ways we may never fully see but can deeply feel.

To me, she was—and will always be—the Monarch butterfly. Graceful, resilient, and luminous. She brought kindness, strength, and light into every room, leaving behind a legacy of inspiration that continues to move through all of us.

As we celebrate this year's honorees and scholarship winners, we not only shine a spotlight on their achievements—we honor the inspiration behind it, and the influence and motivation it sparks in others. Not just success, but significance. Not just individual accomplishment, but collective lift.

Because when one woman rises, she inspires—and carries others with her.

And that is the true power of the butterfly effect.

BETH FELDMAN

Senior Vice President of Communications for Nexstar Media Group/Networks and The CW Network



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

New York Women in Communications would like to show its appreciation for the generous support of the corporations and individuals who have contributed to the financial success of the 2026 Matrix Awards. Proceeds from the event are used by NYWICI to develop and maintain a full calendar of affordable programs and special events, as well as for scholarships, networking, and support systems for the organization's members and the community-at-large.



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THE 56TH ANNUAL MATRIX AWARDS

2026 COMMITTEES

Our deepest thanks to all of those who have helped make this year's Matrix Awards a success. They have brought their intelligence, talent, work ethic, and commitment to bear on producing the 2026 Matrix awards.

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BY THE NUMBERS

\$2.2M+
awarded in scholarships since 1998

410+
young women to date who have received a scholarship

380+
women have been awarded Matrix Awards since 1971

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

Women Who Transform the World and Inspire the Future



NYWICI

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Congratulations to all **2026 Matrix Award** **honorees**

TikTok is proud to support **New York Women in Communications** in their mission to empower industry leaders and celebrate our collective impact in shaping the future.





SHEINELLE JONES

SHEINELLE JONES

Co-host of *TODAY* with Jenna and Sheinelle



“Choosing joy is not always easy, especially when faced with challenges and uncertainties. It requires courage and a steadfast belief in the power of positivity.”

THE
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AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST

Sheinelle Jones Lights Up the Morning

Sheinelle Jones is the co-host of *TODAY with Jenna and Sheinelle*. Prior to hosting *TODAY with Jenna and Sheinelle*, Sheinelle co-anchored *The 3rd Hour* from 2019 to 2025 and *Weekend Today* from 2014 to 2019. Since joining NBC News in 2014, she has covered major breaking news events and a wide range of human-interest stories. Throughout her tenure, Sheinelle has interviewed prominent politicians, celebrities, and newsmakers. Most recently, she traveled to London for an exclusive interview with Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande at the international premiere of *Wicked: For Good*.

Sheinelle is an active member of the National Association of Black Journalists, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and The Links, Incorporated—an international organization committed to strengthening families and communities. Coming from a family of educators, she has a longstanding passion for supporting education initiatives. She was inducted into the Northwestern University Medill School Hall of Achievement, honoring alumni whose work has made significant impact in their fields. She was also recognized by the 2021 Tribute to Trailblazers Hall of Fame, a year-long exhibition celebrating outstanding contributions of influential African Americans.

Sheinelle is the executive producer of the Gracie Award winning MSNBC documentary, “*Stories We Tell: The Fertility Secret*,” which shines a light on 5 women of color and their journey as they reflect on the psychological and physical pain of infertility. She co-hosts a weekly radio show “*Off the Rails*” on Sirius XM with fellow TODAY show co-hosts Al Roker and Dylan Dreyer, and hosts “*Wild Child*,” an award-winning weekly educational series, part of NBC’s “*The More You Know*” family programming.

Before joining TODAY, Sheinelle co-hosted FOX’s Emmy Award—winning morning program *Good Day Philadelphia*, where she reported on local, national, and international headlines. While in Philadelphia, she was honored for her work with children and youth organizations and received proclamations from the City of Philadelphia and the states of Pennsylvania and Delaware for her contributions as both a journalist and volunteer.

Sheinelle began her career as a morning anchor and reporter for WICS-TV in Springfield, Illinois, before moving to FOX Tulsa as an evening anchor and reporter. During her time in Tulsa, she was recognized by the National Association of Black Journalists and the Oklahoma Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

A graduate of Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, Sheinelle holds a bachelor’s degree in broadcast journalism and Spanish. Sheinelle hosted “*Through Mom’s Eyes*,” a digital series for TODAY where she visited with the mothers of celebrities to discuss their journey behind the scenes, and to get their unique take on raising successful children. Her book, *Through Mom’s Eyes: Simple Wisdom From Mothers Who Raised Extraordinary Humans*, was published April 14, 2026.





We're inspired by all the changemakers who lead with courage and compassion and challenge the status quo to shape a brighter future.

*Congratulations to
the 2026 Matrix
Awards honorees*

Celebrating

Tamsen Fadal & Debra OConnell,

NYWICI Matrix Award honorees,

for their powerful voice and impact in media.

Congratulations!

From Ira, Mort, and all of us at





TAMSEN FADAL

Emmy award-winning journalist, *New York Times* best-selling author, podcast host, and Menopause Advocate

“I think the big moment now really is telling women’s stories and seeing the change... We see workplaces incorporating menopause policy. We see women talking about it openly. The first time I brought up a hot flash in the studio, the men scattered.”

THE
BUTTERFLY EFFECT



FROM NEWSROOM TO NEW VOICE

A Career Pivot Driven by Purpose and Impact

Growing up in Albany, NY, and Houston, TX, Tamsen Fadal was known as the talkative kid in class—something she later realized was the perfect foundation for a career in journalism. While she didn't initially know what path she would take, she was always drawn to people and their stories. Determined to build a career in New York, she worked across radio, newspapers, and television, gaining the experience she needed to become a strong, versatile journalist.

What ultimately defined her work was impact. Tamsen was driven by the opportunity to tell stories that might otherwise go unheard—stories that could help, inform, and even create change. She made a promise to every person she interviewed: to handle their story with dignity and respect, and to tell it clearly and truthfully, even when the path to capturing the who, what, where, when, and why wasn't easy.

WHO WERE YOUR ROLE MODELS GROWING UP?

My mom was my role model. She was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was 14 and passed away when I was 20. Watching her go through so much and still be fully present for our family had a profound impact on me. Seeing her struggle on one side and smile on the other made me think—if she can do that, I can do anything.

WHAT DID YOU STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA?

I started in psychology because I was interested in understanding people. But everything changed when I took a radio class. I became obsessed with storytelling—finding a story and communicating it clearly. The moment I walked into a newsroom, it felt like home. That's when I knew journalism was it.

WHAT PROMPTED YOUR SHIFT FROM RADIO TO TELEVISION?

I got a call offering me a job in West Virginia, and I told my brother, 'Stop everything—we're pivoting. I'm going into TV.' Within six months, I went from producer to on-air. I was learning what journalism was really about—building trust and telling stories with dignity and respect.

HOW DID YOUR EARLY CAREER SHAPE YOU?

I moved through several markets and eventually landed in Philadelphia, but my goal was always New York. I worked six or seven days a week between cities because I knew where I wanted to be. In 1994, I started working in New York City.

WHO INFLUENCED YOU PROFESSIONALLY?

My professors made sure we understood journalism—not just being on TV but writing with integrity. Watching Elizabeth Vargas shaped me. She was poised, clear, and incredibly impactful. That level of storytelling motivated me.

DID TRADITIONAL SUCCESS DEFINE YOUR CAREER?

Early on, success was about getting to New York and telling meaningful stories. But over time, that changed. During COVID, health became something I realized we weren't talking about enough—and that shifted everything for me.

YOU'VE SAID THE ONLY THING THAT TOOK YOU OFF THE AIR IN 25 YEARS WAS PERIMENOPAUSE. WHAT HAPPENED?

During a newscast in 2019, I felt this intense heat and had no idea what was happening. Months later, I learned I was in menopause. I didn't connect that the symptoms affecting my confidence were related. When I understood, I couldn't stay quiet.

WHAT DID YOU DO NEXT?

I started talking about my experience on TikTok during COVID, and the response was immediate. Women were hungry for information. I realized this wasn't just my story—it was something much bigger.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO PIVOT YOUR CAREER AT THAT LEVEL?

It was scary. I had spent 25 years in the newsroom and was stepping into an undefined space. But I knew one billion women would go through this, and there was nowhere to turn for answers. I couldn't ignore that.

WHAT CONFIRMED YOU WERE ON THE RIGHT PATH?

Working on a major menopause story with Elizabeth Vargas was a full-circle moment. That experience validated everything for me. I knew this was work I needed to continue.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED AS A LEADING VOICE IN THIS SPACE?

The biggest challenge is still the silence. That's why we created The (M) Factor. It's now reached audiences in over 1,000 cities and 48 countries. Women are ready to talk.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Telling women's stories and seeing real change come from them. We're seeing workplaces introduce menopause policies and more open conversations. That's what matters most to me now.

HOW HAS THIS PIVOT CREATED A RIPPLE EFFECT IN YOUR CAREER?

I reinvented myself—moving into digital storytelling, documentaries, and podcasts. Each step created opportunities I never could have predicted.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HAD BUTTERFLIES?

Every time I step on stage. That feeling reminds me I'm in the right place. Butterflies are a good thing—they mean you care.

PRESENTER

RESHMA SAUJANI

Founder and CEO
Moms First



What do you most admire about Tamsen's impact or leadership?

"Tamsen has a rare and extraordinary gift for turning stories into movements. She knows that women's stories, when told honestly, have the power to move people to action, and I have watched her prove it time and again. We need that reminder now more than ever. A microphone in the right hands is one of the most powerful tools for change we have, and I'm so grateful that Tamsen is using hers."

Congratulations, Diana Haussling

We think you're dreamy, too!

Your friends at, **WALRUS**



WPP

WPP congratulates

**Diana
Haussling**

ON BEING NAMED A 2026 MATRIX HONOREE.

Thank you for bringing your special "everyday yay" to leadership.
We're proud to celebrate this well-deserved recognition.



DIANA HAUSSLING

CEO, hello Products

“It’s really important to me, especially as we think about what’s going on in the world today, to make sure that not only do I show up to these spaces and I represent, but I also make a way and make a better table for those that come after me.”

THE
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OWNING YOUR SUPERPOWERS — COURAGE, CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

Diana Haussling on Legacy, Leadership, and the Power of Small Moments

For Diana Haussling, it can be something as simple as a handwritten note from a boss at Campbell's Soup, telling her she was going to have a fantastic career and to keep using her voice—that sets off a ripple effect that changes everything. The small gesture gave her the courage to speak up—and to say yes. As she puts it, 'people remember not only what you said, but how you made them feel, and that transforms into how you show up the next day, the next meeting, for that next call.'

A self-identified Jersey girl, Diana grew up in a vibrant, loud household—first generation, Bahamian and Jamaican roots, where community and education weren't just values, they were a way of life. As a child, she was equal parts outgoing and focused, always clear on what she wanted to get out of this world. Early in her career she was the person who said yes to everything—moves to new cities, new teams, new challenges. But as her father always told her, 'The title is there, the money is yours, so act accordingly,' It wasn't just about collecting titles—it was about collecting experiences. And those experiences, one yes at a time, led her from a sales floor to e-commerce pioneer, from CMO to CEO of hello Products.

Diana believes that you know you're in a good place when you're excited and just a little uncomfortable all at once. And perhaps that's how we should all approach each step of our journey. One small moment at a time.

BEING FIRST GENERATION HERE IN THIS COUNTRY—HOW DID THAT SHAPE YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

To quote the Broadway musical *Hamilton*: Immigrants get the job done. Growing up in a household filled with community really set the stage for me to understand not just what it meant to have a village, but what it means to be a villager—extending yourself, thinking about the people around you and how you can uplift them. That sense of community and connectivity is something that I've taken with me everywhere I've gone.

YOU'VE DESCRIBED YOUR FATHER AS A FEMINIST WHO DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A FEMINIST—WHAT DID HE TEACH YOU THAT STILL STAYS WITH YOU TODAY?

He raised us not only to believe that we could do anything, but to achieve our full potential. He was an engineer—very practical, very pragmatic. There was not a manual that he did not read from cover to cover. I tell a story about how my toilet broke at one point, and I was on the phone with him, and he said, 'Diana, it's a \$10 part. Take yourself to Lowe's and learn how a toilet works. Don't pay for something you can easily fix yourself.' Those life lessons have really stuck with me—I will make sure that I understand how everything

works so others can't take advantage of me. That sense of curiosity, determination, and the belief that I can do things really comes from how he invested in me.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE GREATEST SINGULAR CHALLENGE IN YOUR CAREER?

I think I was the biggest challenge in my career. My biggest barrier was not being able to quickly identify my strengths early on and being comfortable shouting them to the rooftops. It is often uncomfortable for women, especially women of color, to advocate for themselves—because we're trained to be polite and humble. But your work doesn't benefit from you being shy. If anyone is like me, I have a little hater in my head. Those phantom ceilings of 'you can't do this because you don't have that', those self-limitations are the biggest barriers. And when you finally understand what your superpowers are and connect those dots, that's when you really unlock the magic.

YOU TOOK A NONTRADITIONAL ROUTE TO E-COMMERCE — IN WHAT WAY WAS YOUR PATH NONTRADITIONAL

My whole career has been nontraditional. I started off in sales even though my degree was in marketing, shifted to more traditional marketing, then went after spaces I felt would be the future of the industry. That's where e-commerce came into play. When I was at Campbell Soup, everybody was on the internet, but we didn't really see a place for it with food. I saw it as an

opportunity to build something. At Campbell's, if you had a passion for something, that would become your responsibility. So, I raised my hand and said I want to be an e-commerce leader. That small moment turned out to be the start of me pivoting into later becoming a CMO and now a CEO.

HOW IMPORTANT IS SPONSORSHIP TO YOU?

I look at sponsorship as an active verb—speaking highly of individuals in rooms they're not in, creating opportunities for people who may not realize they'd be awesome at a specific role. I was lucky enough to have sponsors who believed in me and saw things in me that I didn't see in myself. And as a sponsor today, I make it a point to do the same for others. Sponsorship has really been the magic—not only in my career, but so many others.

FOR YOUNG WOMEN TODAY, WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE?

Do not stay in any environment where you're only being tolerated. We don't get this short moment we have on this planet to just be tolerated—that's like somebody telling you your outfit looks fine. Nobody wants to look fine. Go into places that value you, recognize your superpowers, and see your potential. Those places exist. It's okay to start over—you will figure out a way to make a way, regardless of where you are.

PRESENTER

SARAH HOFSTETTER

Board Director
Campbell's and Kenvue



What do you most admire about Diana's impact or leadership?

"Diana is fearless without being reckless; Candid without being performative; gets s#it done while keeping her eyes on the prize. What I admire most is how she's turned perceived vulnerability into enormous strength. She's open about the hard parts, and in doing that, she raises the standard for everyone around her."

CELEBRATING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We are proud to honor this extraordinary
group of honorees:

**DIANA HAUSSLING
ABBAY KLAASSEN
DEBRA OCONNELL
CARLA SERRANO**

These leaders' vision, integrity, and impact
embody the true spirit of
the *Butterfly Effect*.

With heartfelt congratulations,
Michael Kassan & 3C Ventures





ABBEY KLAASSEN

Outgoing US CEO and Global Brand President, Dentsu Creative
Incoming CEO, Tinuiti

“One piece of advice I would give people just starting out in the industry, especially young women, is to get comfortable with discomfort. Change is hard. We’re living in a time of incredible transformation and change.”

THE
BUTTERFLY EFFECT



CURIOSITY, COURAGE, AND CAN-DO

Abbey Klaassen on Leadership, Creativity, and Reinvention

The butterfly effect holds that small things, often unremarkable things, can set off a chain of events that changes everything.

Abbey Klaassen grew up in Buffalo, Minnesota, then population 6,000. At five years old, she told her grandmother she was going to live in a big city someday. Her grandmother probably smiled. Abbey wasn't kidding. Today she is the Incoming CEO, Tinuiti, and the outgoing US CEO and Global Brand President of Dentsu Creative, and former editor of *Ad Age*.

What carried Abbey from the Midwest to New York City can be distilled into three words she uses as a set of personal values: curiosity, courage, and can-do. Not a mission statement. Not a talking point. Curiosity to ask the right questions and be open to other points of view. Courage to do things even when it's hard—a word she notes comes from the French word for heart (*coeur*)—a muscle you exercise. And can-do, because—in her words—it's not about what you can't do. Rather, it's about what you can do. There's always a solution.

As for Abbey, the butterfly effect isn't just the story of how she got to where she is, it's a responsibility. "Everything we do has an impact. As leaders, people are watching us and taking their cues from us. What we do today, will ripple through even future generations."

WHILE YOU WERE A STUDENT AT DRAKE UNIVERSITY, A SUMMER INTERNSHIP AT AD AGE WAS A PIVOTAL MOMENT. WHAT MAKE IT SO FORMATIVE?

My summer at *Ad Age* was transformative. I had some really great teachers in the reporters and editors there. I also learned: if you hang around the hoop, good things happen. Always raise your hand. Be willing to take on things other people didn't want to do.

In fact, I had one story while I was there that ended up on the cover—and it was all because one of the reporters didn't want to cover it. One of the editors said, "Why don't you take a crack at this!" And it turned out to be bigger than everybody thought it would be.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER?

That transition from individual contributor to leader was a turning point. I was a reporter and running *Ad Age Digital* and promoted to the editor of *Ad Age*. Suddenly, I had the entire editorial team reporting to me. I had people reporting to me who had been my bosses previously. To this day, I'm not sure I ever felt quite so nervous as that morning they announced me as the new editor of *Ad Age*. That's where you exercise the muscle of courage: Do it, even when you're scared.

I learned how important it is, as a leader, to help the people on your team become stronger. When you're a reporter, it's in some ways very much an individual sport. When you become an editor, it's all about how you develop the team—the staff, the reporters, the

other editors—better. You go from being the star, having your byline all over the publication, to being much more behind the scenes. But it's actually very fulfilling because you're impacting a much bigger system.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TRANSITIONING FROM JOURNALISM INTO ADVERTISING?

It's really hard when you make a transition from one industry to another, especially if you're toward the top of your craft—because there's a lot of relearning. You used to know the answer to everything, and then you move into a new industry like advertising, and you have to relearn what all of these job titles even mean.

One of the things I learned very early on, because it's a client service industry, is how do you think about clients and what matters to them. It's about recasting your communication style. It's about recasting how you even think about what you're trying to communicate.

HOW IS TODAY'S TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE RESHAPING THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR WORK?

I firmly believe that all of this technology creates huge opportunity and a lot of benefit. But I think we have to be careful about how we leverage it ethically and in the right ways.

At the heart of that is humanity and creativity. It's not about leveraging technology to replace our humanity—it's about how we leverage it to augment our humanity, to make us more insightful, more powerful, to give us more time to be creative. It's putting humanity at the center of all this technological change.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO STAY INSPIRED AND RESILIENT IN SUCH CHALLENGING TIMES?

One of the things I love most about New York City is that you are out there living with other people. I find being around people inspiring. I love being present with my colleagues, it gives me energy. I learn from them in real life.

I also love being outside. Getting away from the screens, feeling the air, seeing the sun—going for hikes, skiing, bike riding. That balance of being very connected but also occasionally disconnecting from the real world is something that keeps me sane.

PRESENTER

MARLA KAPLOWITZ

Board Director & Strategic Advisor



What do you most admire about Abbey's impact or leadership?
"Abbey's leadership is defined by genuine curiosity and a humility that keeps her team at the center. She creates space for bold thinking by making people feel deeply supported with her thoughtful approach giving them the confidence to do their best work."

MATRIX HONOREE

MATRIX HONOREE

MATRIX HONOREE

MATRIX HONOREE

MATRIX HONOREE



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ABBEY AND
ALL OF THE 2026 MATRIX HONOREES.**



Congratulations to Ashley Miles

Founder & CEO of Franklyn West
on being named a **Matrix Honoree**.

The foundation proudly celebrates Ashley
for her bold leadership and unwavering
commitment to driving growth and
innovation in business.



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Celebrates
Ashley Miles

for her inspiring work as founder
& CEO of Franklyn West

Congratulations to Ashley and all the 2026 Matrix Honorees!

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ASHLEY MILES

Founder & CEO, Franklyn West

“I had no Rolodex. I had no experience, but I had a passion for making things happen. I had a passion for innovation.”

THE
BUTTERFLY EFFECT



LIFE, BUSINESS AND THE WILD WILD WEST

In the Deep South of Baton Rouge, Louisiana Ashley Miles was never one for rules or being a top student. She had something better (and more rare): grit, imagination, determination, and an inner cowgirl spirit ready to be unleashed. At the age of eight, Ashley became a competitive equestrian rider and learned responsibility, ownership, and the gutsy art of “doing it anyway”—even when fear showed up first. Those early sparks of ambition, born somewhere between daydreams and four-foot-tall jumps, became the fuel for everything that followed in her life and career.

WHO WERE YOUR ROLE MODELS GROWING UP?

I had many positive influences in a family of self-made, audacious, bold business leaders and entrepreneurs. I was raised by hard-working parents who weren't afraid to push boundaries and dream big. My family consists of strong matriarchal women who lead by example. My tried-and-true mentors throughout my whole life and still to this day are my grandparents, Frank and Madelyn. My company, Franklyn West is named for them. They represent high integrity, excellence in all they do and a love for family and business.

WHAT WAS YOUR LIGHT BULB MOMENT REGARDING YOUR INTERNSHIP IN NEW YORK?

I wanted to work in NYC but had no connections, so I went to the local Walmart in Oxford, Mississippi and bought 15 different magazines. I sent hand-written letters and my resume to people on the mastheads. Adrienne Mellen from *Teen People* was the only one who called me back. She hired me as an intern on the spot. That moment boosted my confidence and once again, made me realize that anything is possible.

DESCRIBE YOUR TRAJECTORY FROM YOUR FIRST JOB OUT OF COLLEGE AT *INSTYLE* AND YOUR PROMOTION WITHIN 12 MONTHS!

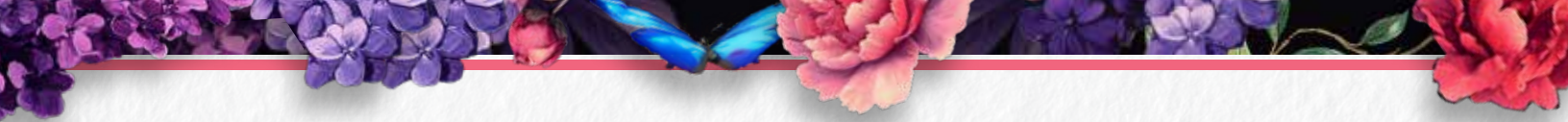
I was so grateful to work for two powerhouse women in advertising right out college. I went above and beyond to help any executive who needed it. I never thought in terms of my job scope and instead would do any job that needed to get done. From getting coffees to

color coordinating executives filing systems to hand delivering presentations to ad agencies so my bosses didn't have to do it. No job was too big or too small. Often, I was the first one in the office and the last one to leave. One evening, I was at the office around 9 p.m. and our Associate Publisher had left her blackberry behind and was leaving for Europe the next day. I volunteered to bring it to her home on the Upper East Side but there was a storm and no taxi in site. I resorted to hopping in a pedicab and although I showed up soaking wet, she got it just in time. Another thrill as a sales assistant was when my boss went out of town, I proactively helped sell a two-page spread with a top beauty company to help her hit her goals. These efforts caught the attention of senior executives who quickly promoted me to help build out the digital businesses for InStyle.com and the Style and Entertainment Group at Time Inc. They handpicked me with no professional sales experience outside of my college newspaper, but I had a passion for doing good work and delivering results.

Every minute in that decision and within that role, I was afraid. I didn't let fear stop me. I was driven. I wanted my company to succeed. I wanted my team to succeed. I felt that fear every day, the anxiety and the stress of such a bold decision, but I decided to push through and ignore it. I decided I was going to say yes to every opportunity and never be outworked.

AFTER 20 YEARS OF REMARKABLE SUCCESS, WHAT INCENTIVIZED YOU TO START YOUR OWN COMPANY?

I launched my company in the middle of the pandemic to make broader impact in the business community that had given me so much throughout my career. I was ready to set my own vision, values and play by my own



rules. By doing so, I could offer that positive experience to others. These are some of the many reasons that self-funding seemed to be a natural fit. Franklyn West was the solution I always wanted when I was in-house operating as a Chief Commercial Officer. I was always looking for ways to solve problems faster by bringing in the best talent and solutions, but the old playbooks were slow and expensive. So, I created something new that helps leaders like me grow and scale smarter, faster and in more agile ways.

WHAT WAS THE MOST PIVOTAL MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER?

The decision to bet on myself and launch my own company was one I knew I was destined to make. I knew that my vision was future-forward and that I could make a difference. I needed less red tape and more flexibility to execute for companies, leaders, and the growing liquid talent and technology ecosystem.

DESCRIBE THE NEW CONSULTING MODEL YOU CREATED FOR FRANKLYN WEST.

We're a boutique growth advisory that helps companies grow and scale. We do this by operating with speed, agility, and collaboration tapping into the growing liquid workforce to help leaders solve new problems faster. We bring in brilliant minds and technologies across different domains (marketing, communications, commercial strategy, tech) to build new revenue streams, execute digital transformations and launch new categories. We are also brought in to capture "low hanging fruit" wins

that are more tactical, yet sucking up high value time for internal teams.

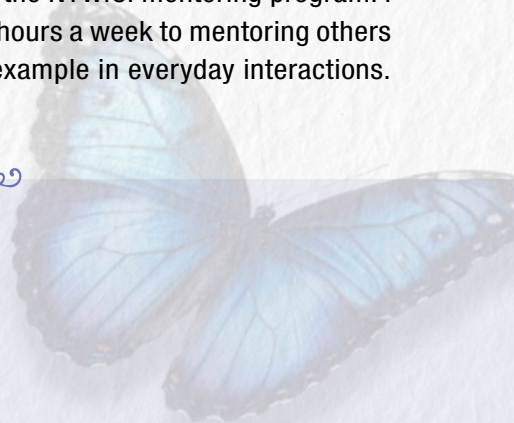
Like early in my career, no job is too big or too small—we just want to make a positive impact. With the rise of AI, we are helping companies transform with care, putting humanity in the driver's seat by leveraging AI as an empowerment tool instead of a replacement tool. Some favorite initiatives are executive readiness programs, AI partner selections and end-to-end AI transformations and upskilling. It's an inspiring time to help leaders win with so much disruption and upside. We build the new car, teach the team to drive it and then either get out of the way or stay on for maintenance. Collaboration and trust are key.

WHAT DOES THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT MEAN TO YOU AS IT PERTAINS TO YOUR CAREER?

The butterfly effect means rising up and reaching back. Connecting great talents to great opportunities—there's no greater ripple effect than that! My focus in this next chapter is to be the most trusted resource for leaders looking to advance their businesses and careers.

HOW IMPORTANT IS MENTORSHIP TO YOU?

I have incredible mentors, many of them are in this room. Liz Kaplow, Kim Kelleher, Jacki Kelly, Judith Harrison, Nancy Weber, these are my sisters in business. I mentor young women through the NYWICI mentoring program. I try and dedicate three hours a week to mentoring others as well as leading by example in everyday interactions.



PRESENTER

MARISA THALBERG

EVP, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer, Catalyst Brands
Co-host, The Brand New Podcast



What do you most admire about Ashley's impact or leadership?
"Everything about Ashley's leadership style (and style, period!) is defiantly original, fun, smart and heartfelt. She embodies the best of both worlds—a New York tenacity paired with genuine Southern charm."



WE PROUDLY CONGRATULATE
DEBRA OCONNELL
ON BEING HONORED BY
NYWICI

We applaud your dedication to elevating the next generation of women leaders, and for leading the way with authenticity, strength, and kindness.

– Your friends at Sony Pictures Television

Katherine Pope | Suzanne Prete



DEBRA O'CONNELL

DEBRA O'CONNELL

Chairman, Disney Entertainment Television
The Walt Disney Company

“Be clear, consistent and uncompromising with your standards and always lead with the value you bring, an appreciation for the expertise of others and the confidence that there isn't anything you can't accomplish as a team.”

THE
BUTTERFLY EFFECT



INSIDE AND OUTSIDE HER COMFORT ZONE

Debra O’Connell’s favorite quote is, “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” It’s a philosophy that mirrors the path of her career—one defined by curiosity, collaboration, innovation, and most of all, a deep love for great storytelling.

In many ways, Debra’s journey reflects the butterfly effect: small moments, unexpected opportunities, and the people she’s encountered along the way have shaped a remarkable rise through the media industry. From her early fascination with television, to leading one of the most influential news organizations in the world, to modernizing Disney’s television strategy to maximize profitability for linear entertainment networks while fueling streaming growth, each step has built upon the last.

Throughout her career, Debra has approached every role with a learner’s mindset—asking questions, studying every corner of the business, and gaining insight from colleagues across creative, business strategy, and operational teams. Those experiences deepened her understanding of the industry and helped propel a leadership journey that continues to evolve today.

YOU GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE SUMMA CUM LAUDE WITH A BS IN MARKETING AND BROADCAST TELECOMMUNICATIONS. DID YOU KNOW WHAT TYPE OF CAREER YOU WANTED TO PURSUE, OR DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR PASSION IN COLLEGE?

I’ve been fascinated with the television business and the media industry for as long as I can remember. So, I knew exactly where I wanted to go when I stepped on campus, I just had to figure out how to get there. That clarity, that sense of wonder, has stayed with me. Even now, in my role leading Disney Entertainment Television, I’m still driven by that passion for great storytelling that connects with audiences.

WAS THERE ONE INTERNSHIP THAT STOOD OUT AND WAS IMPACTFUL?

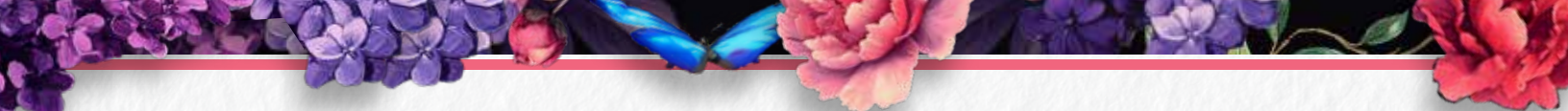
My internship with SportsChannel—which was a joint venture between Cablevision and NBC—was instrumental in giving me a working knowledge of broadcasting and TV production. I was part of a team that produced weekly pieces for a live weekend broadcast, which gave me hands-on experience with every facet of the production process. I also learned invaluable lessons about programming and the balance of local and regional storytelling.

YOUR FIRST JOB OUT OF COLLEGE WAS IN RADIO. WHAT DID YOU LEARN AND TAKE AWAY FROM THAT EXPERIENCE?

Getting that job was a real pinch-me moment—my first step toward a life-long dream of having a career in media. While radio and television are unique in their own ways, the broadcast fundamentals are actually very similar—areas like programming for an audience, the economics of production, storytelling, operations, and working with talent. I’m grateful for my time in radio—it helped shape my approach and I still go back to some of those early lessons.

FROM RUNNING WABC-TV, TO THEN TAKING ON LEADERSHIP ACROSS ALL OF ABC NEWS AND DISNEY ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION AND NOW SERVING AS CHAIRMAN OF ALL OF DISNEY ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION, YOU HAVE HAD INSPIRING CAREER PATH. HOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITIES AT DISNEY SHAPED YOUR CAREER?

In addition to being the most powerful storytelling engine in the world, what sets The Walt Disney Company apart is the breadth of the business and our global reach. Over the course of my Disney career, I’ve had the opportunity to work across multiple disciplines—sales, operations, creative, and leadership—in roles spanning local, national, and international markets. That perspective has given



me a comprehensive understanding of how the business operates end-to-end, and how success in one area of the company drives growth in another. That's critical for Disney Entertainment Television, where we're serving diverse audiences through iconic brands while also fueling the strength and growth of our streaming platforms.

WHAT WAS THE MOST UNEXPECTED TRANSITION OF YOUR CAREER?

One of the most unexpected, and ultimately rewarding, opportunities was the chance to become the president of WABC-TV New York, which is the number one station in the country and is responsible for the top syndicated daytime talk show, 'Live with Kelly and Mark.' It was my first chance to lead across news production, local and national programming, and syndication—areas I had experienced before but now with full responsibility. It required a more integrated, holistic view of the business—bringing together teams, content, and audiences in a more cohesive way. Looking back, it was a defining moment for me and one of the best decisions I've ever made in my career.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF OVERSEEING DISNEY ENTERTAINMENT NETWORKS?

One of the most important shifts we made was evolving our brands and businesses to provide greater consumer choice, allowing viewers to experience our content on the platform of their choosing. We made deliberate decisions to modernize our strategy, including how we program, how we window content, and how we engage audiences. A great example is our news portfolio. ABC News is an iconic brand with a deeply loyal audience and is a cornerstone of our linear strategy. The opportunity and the challenge was translating the urgency and relevance of news into a streaming environment without diluting the brand. ABC News Live, our 24/7 streaming offering, marked a major milestone last year passing more than 500 million hours watched with no signs of letting up as we saw 100 million hours of year-over-year growth. We also launched 'What You Need To Know,' the first streaming news program created specifically for Disney+, which has since expanded to include an afternoon edition, and we debuted 'The Weekend View,' extending

this influential brand to a live streaming format. All while ABC News continues to be the most watched and trusted name in broadcast. In fact, 'World News Tonight with David Muir' is often the number one program across all of television on any given day. That's extraordinary. This success reinforces a broader point that continues to guide us at Disney Entertainment Television—it's not about linear or streaming, it's about great storytelling and meeting audiences wherever they are.

WHAT ACHIEVEMENT OR CAREER MILESTONE MAKES YOU MOST PROUD AND WHY?

There are so many moments I'm proud of—I've been fortunate to have so many great opportunities, surrounded by amazing people, in an industry that I love and that continues to inspire and challenge me. Lately, I've been feeling extremely proud of the work we're doing at Disney Entertainment Television to modernize our strategy to bring our world-class programming to viewers wherever they are and whenever they want to watch. The entertainment industry is clearly going through a massive transformation and as major players consolidate, we are proving every day that Disney is truly in a category of one. I'm very proud of our team for embracing that change and doing what's necessary to build a more strategically aligned, resilient business, while never taking their eyes off what truly matters—telling great stories and serving our fans with the stellar programming they have come to expect from Disney Entertainment Television.

WHO HAS BEEN YOUR MOST IMPACTFUL PROFESSIONAL MENTOR?

George Bodenheimer, chairman of ESPN & ABC Sports, was assigned to me during a mentor program across The Walt Disney Company, and I felt so fortunate to have him a phone call away for much of my career. I currently work for Dana Walden, who has been an incredible mentor to me. Working with someone like her is a masterclass in creativity and business.

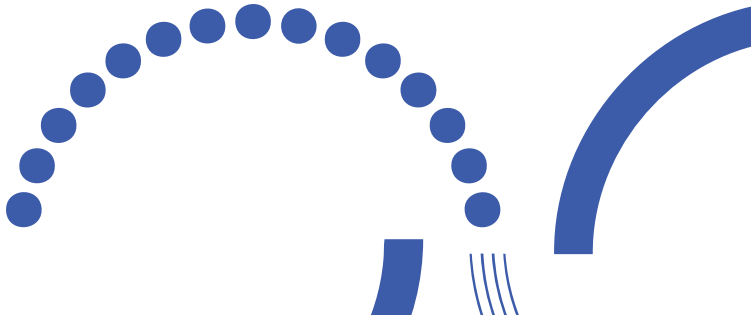
HOW DOES THE ENERGY OF NEW YORK CITY INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE YOU?

There is no place in the world like New York City. I am always uplifted here and absolutely thrive on the city's energy and endless possibilities.

CONGRATULATIONS
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and all the
Matrix Honorees

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Congratulations to
Debra OConnell

We celebrate your leadership and vision
and are proud to call you a friend



The Ad Council joins New York Women
in Communications to celebrate the

2026 Matrix Award Honorees.

As trailblazers, you continue to pave the way
for the next generation of female leaders.



Google congratulates these extraordinary Matrix Honorees
Abbey Klaassen, Carla Serrano, and Khartoon Weiss





CONGRATULATIONS, CARLA SERRANO

*From Your Friends,
Fans & Family*





CARLA SERRANO

Chief Strategy Officer, Publicis Groupe

“I wake up every morning and I literally think, what am I going to fix today? And I say it with enthusiasm.”

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT



BORN A LEARNER, BUILT A LEADER

Carla Serrano's Journey of Transformation

Carla Serrano's transformation began with the people who challenged, supported, and mentored her from the very start—a butterfly effect that shaped her entire career. As the daughter of Filipino immigrants who excelled at Harvard and MIT, and the granddaughter of two brilliant doctors, she grew up surrounded by learners. Their guiding mantra, “if you can read it, you can do it,” became the foundation of her confidence, curiosity, and ambition.

When account planning first emerged as a discipline in advertising, Carla stepped into the field with a spirit of experimentation. She helped shape what the role could become, embracing both the creative and strategic freedom it offered. That blend of instinct, intellect, and boldness propelled her forward and made her one of the industry's most respected strategists.

YOU EARNED A BA IN ENGLISH AND PSYCHOLOGY FROM MCGILL UNIVERSITY. HOW DID THAT PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

They were the perfect blend of subjects that fascinated me and ultimately shaped my career. Strategy is about understanding what makes people tick, and much of my work centers on writing, analysis, and figuring out the most effective way to communicate an idea.

AFTER GRADUATING, WHAT TYPE OF CAREER WERE YOU HOPING TO PURSUE?

I had no idea what I wanted to do, but I needed a job, so I started temping at advertising agencies—even though I knew nothing about the industry. During two weeks as a receptionist at Chiat Day, my curiosity took over. I read everything I could and watched how the business worked.

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN CREATIVES, ACCOUNT TEAMS, MEDIA EXPERTS, AND PLANNERS ALL WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS—AND REALIZED IMMEDIATELY THAT'S THE KIND OF WORK YOU WANT TO DO?

Two days before my assignment ended, I emailed the president of Chiat Day with reasons he should hire me

as an account planner. Minutes later he walked onto the floor and asked who sent the email. I stood up—and he hired me on the spot. Later I learned he had started his career as an account planner too.

WHERE DID YOU FIND THE CONFIDENCE TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND MOVE FORWARD IN YOUR CAREER?

The confidence my sister and I carry came directly from our parents. Even now I genuinely believe that if I decided to become a neurosurgeon tomorrow, I might not perform the surgery—but I'm pretty sure I could pass the exam.

HOW DID YOUR EARLY BRAND EXPERIENCES SHAPE YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INNOVATION?

The first brand I worked on was Apple during the Think Different campaign. As planners we talked to consumers about their reactions. One of the biggest comments was that “Think Different” was grammatically incorrect.

I brought that back to the team and asked what we should do about it. Their response was simple: exactly—that's why people are paying attention. It was an early lesson that sometimes breaking rules is what makes ideas powerful.

YOUR INTEGRATION OF PLANNING, DIGITAL, AND MEDIA TRANSFORMED HOW AGENCIES APPROACHED BUSINESS. WHAT INSPIRED THAT VISION?

It came from observing how people actually interact with brands. I became deeply committed to developing integrated planning because when those capabilities work together, they create a far more authentic and meaningful consumer experience.

WHAT WAS THE MOST PIVOTAL MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER AND WHY?

Saying yes to becoming Publicis' Chief Strategy Officer. I initially turned the role down because CSOs at holding companies were often advisors who didn't stay close to the work—and I love the work.

I ultimately accepted the position on the condition that I could keep my CEO role and remain hands-on with clients. Staying "in the kitchen" was the only way I knew I could create strategies that were grounded and impactful.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

The biggest challenge was simply being different from the traditional mold of account planners. The field was largely dominated by British and Commonwealth

strategists, and many of my mentors came from that tradition.

Early in my career there was an expectation that I would approach strategy the same way—very academic and intellectual. Over time, I realized the most powerful thing I could do was develop my own voice and perspective.

WHAT ABOUT MENTORSHIP?

Mentorship is deeply important to me and something I practice every day. In meetings and conversations—especially with young women—I try to share what I've learned and offer practical guidance.

To me, mentorship isn't a formal program. It's a daily commitment to helping others grow.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS—FROM TEMP TO CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER?

Curiosity and determination. I remain curious and always want to find solutions. I wake up every morning thinking: What am I going to fix today?

WHAT'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT WOULD SURPRISE PEOPLE?

I never leave the house without yoga gear.

PRESENTER ARTHUR SADOUN

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Publicis Groupe



What do you most admire about Carla's impact or leadership?

"Carla is a unique force in our industry, capable of harnessing creativity in all its forms, unlocking it across data, media, and technology, at the service of our clients.

Not only is she the architect of ambitious ideas that build brands and businesses for the long-term, she also ignites breakthrough creativity that delivers immediate impact in the here and now.

Carla has been integral to our biggest wins because of her relentless drive to solve the biggest problems with the most modern solutions. But her impact isn't just transformational for our clients. Carla has changed how our company operates. She's the mastermind behind new concepts, initiatives and ways of working that inspire our over 100,000 people around the world to think differently, move faster, and push further every day."

NYWICI *Podcast* WOMENHEARD

Presented by New York Women in Communications, WomenHeard is a career-focused podcast where women across the communications industry share personal stories and practical advice. Hosted by career expert Julie Hochheiser Ilkovich and NYWICI Past President Georgia Galanoudis, the series explores career growth, equity, and the pivotal moments that shape confident, effective leadership.

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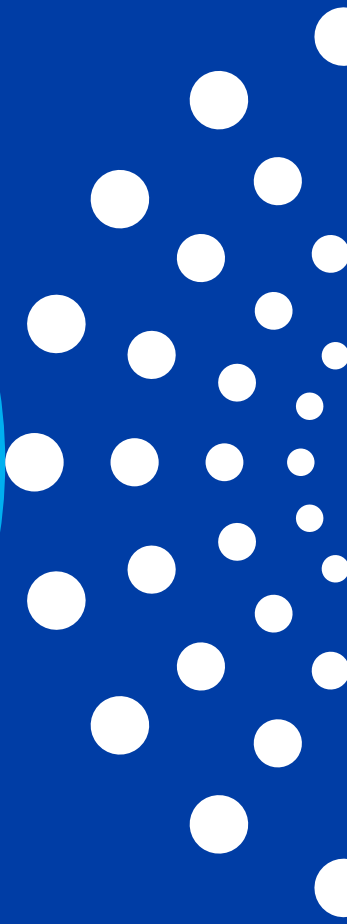
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KHARTOON WEISS

2026 MATRIX
HONOREE

We celebrate you as a trailblazer
whose transformative impact lights
the way and inspires generations to
create a better future.





KHARTOON WEISS

Vice President, Global Customer Solutions, Google

“While I don’t have biological children, I have hundreds of ‘kids’. I feel a profound calling to nurture the next generation of talent. I view my role as the ‘big sister in the schoolyard’—the one who always has your back. Mentorship isn’t an extracurricular for me; it’s a core component of my daily work. When you’re in my circle, you’re there for life.”

THE
BUTTERFLY EFFECT



CREATIVE, CURIOUS, AND KINETIC

Khartoon Weiss on Patterns, Perseverance, and Leaving a Lasting Legacy

For Khartoon Weiss, it began with a ballet audition she didn't realize she was attending. Her mother enrolled her in an audition that tested for flexibility, and before long, she was at Juilliard—one of the nation's premier performing arts institutions. From ages six to sixteen, she trained alongside principal dancers, received coaching from Baryshnikov and Jerome Robbins, and shared the stage with child actors like *Home Alone's* Macaulay Culkin. This rigorous classical training instilled a definitive ethos: "perfect" was the only acceptable standard. That relentless pursuit of excellence created a ripple effect that continues to define her presence in every boardroom and leadership role she occupies.

While ballet provided her foundation, her former mentor at BBDO, Mark Goldstein, taught her the value of audacity. He often urged her, "Toon, you are fearless. Get out of your own way and get it done". That single piece of advice emboldened her to embrace daunting challenges, command rooms where she felt like an outsider, and move forward without hesitation.

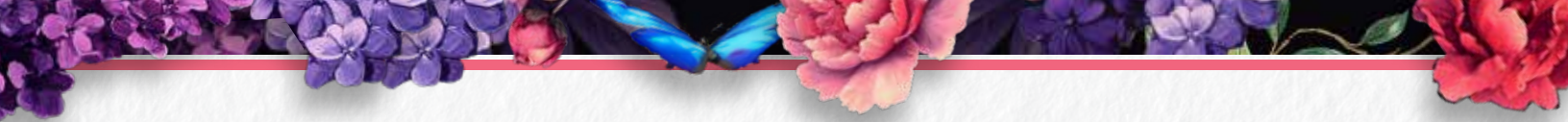
Today, Khartoon is a pivotal force in modern marketing and 21st-century brand building. To her, the "butterfly effect" represents a singular mission: ensuring everything she touches is left better than she found it.

YOUR FIRST PROFESSIONAL ROLE WAS AS A RECEPTIONIST AT A BROKERAGE FIRM AT AGE 14. HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE SHAPE YOUR TRAJECTORY?

I was raised with a strong service-oriented mindset, so I approached the role with a "no task is too small" attitude. A woman named Martha recognized my potential and consistently challenged me with more complex responsibilities. What began as a summer receptionist position evolved into a year-round back-office role, where I assisted in crafting IPOs and back-office operations at a brokerage house. I became an intellectual sponge, eager to master anything anyone would teach me. I entered a kinetic rhythm: I've always been the type to turn 'what if' into 'done.'

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE OF YOUR CAREER?

The primary obstacles weren't always the obvious ones. Navigating the creative and media landscapes of the 90s and 2000s as a woman of color with an unconventional name presented unique hurdles. The real challenge was not just earning a seat at the table, but maintaining it. I took immense pride in outworking and outperforming everyone in the room. Ballet taught me a high tolerance for discomfort—I've joked that I haven't truly felt my feet in decades—so I simply walked the walk with singular focus.



FROM ADVERTISING AND MEDIA TO STREAMING AND TIKTOK, YOU'VE NAVIGATED MASSIVE SHIFTS. HOW DO YOU CONSISTENTLY ANTICIPATE WHAT'S NEXT?

Interestingly, I don't look to business books for insight; I read patents. I've developed an intuition for spotting emerging patterns and trends before they go mainstream. I applied this to data-driven decision-making, then to streaming-led product development, and later to the intersection of commerce and content. I am perpetually searching for the next dynamic shift. This desire to decode patterns has been the compass for my career and continues to dictate my next move.

HOW CENTRAL IS MENTORSHIP AND "PAYING IT FORWARD" TO YOUR PERSONAL MISSION?

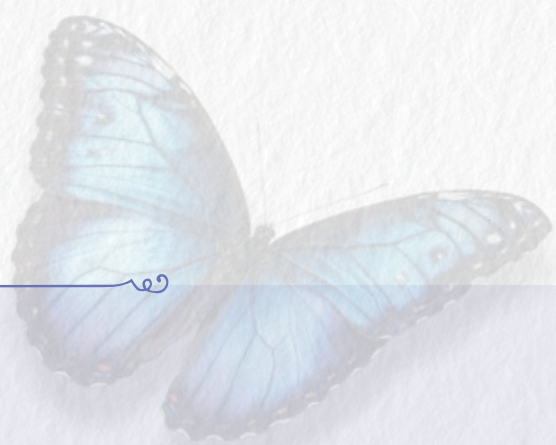
Mark taught me that you don't find mentors; they find you. Because of that, while I don't have biological children, I have hundreds of "kids". I feel a profound calling to nurture the next generation of talent. I view my role as the "big sister in the schoolyard"—the one who always has your back. Mentorship isn't an extracurricular for me; it's a core component of my daily work. When you're in my circle, you're there for life.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR RESILIENCE?

It's rooted in my upbringing as a first-generation American born to immigrant parents; in that context, resilience is a necessity, not an option. However, I also manage any professional anxiety through exhaustive preparation. Whether it's isolating in a hotel room to focus or seeking a moment of quiet reflection, I hold myself to an incredibly high—perhaps even exacting—standard. I strive for that 100% to demonstrate that mastery comes through practice. When you've put in the hours, "butterflies" cease to be a source of fear and instead become something you can appreciate as a sign of growth.

HOW DOES THE ENERGY OF NEW YORK CITY INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE YOU?

New York runs on a kind of voltage you don't find anywhere else. It's culture in motion, ideas colliding on every corner, creativity that doesn't wait for permission. The city's always on, and it pulls you up to match it. You either keep pace or get left behind, and that pressure has a way of energizing me.



PRESENTER
DARYL LEE

Global Chairman
McCann



**“What do you most admire about Khartoon’s impact or leadership?
“Despite her amazing success, I admire most Khartoon’s fierce pride in her humble roots as a daughter of immigrants. She is the best of the American Dream”**



REFLECTIONS FROM PAST MATRIX HONOREES

As part of this year's Matrix Awards celebration, we invited past Matrix honorees to reflect on the enduring impact of receiving this prestigious recognition. These remarkable women continue to inspire us, not only through their groundbreaking accomplishments, but through the wisdom and guidance they offer the next generation.

We asked each honoree: Who made a quiet but meaningful difference for you early in your career and how did that influence the leader you became?

Their responses spoke volumes. More than a professional milestone, the Matrix Award represents a profound moment of affirmation—recognizing a lifetime of hard work, vision, and exemplary contributions to the field of communications. Many described it as a turning point: a moment when their voices, impact, and leadership were not just acknowledged, but elevated.

Receiving a Matrix doesn't just reflect past success—it opens new doors, expands influence, and deepens the responsibility to lift others as they rise. It is a legacy-builder, a source of pride shared with teams, mentors, and organizations who helped shape the journey.



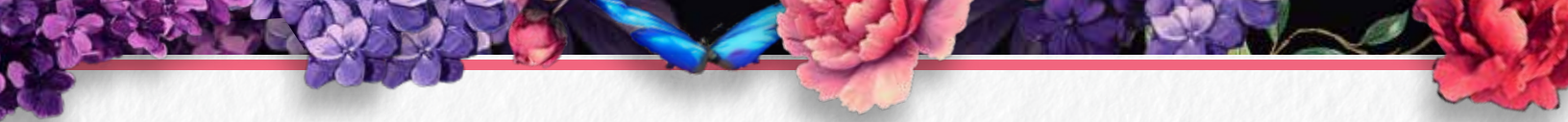
“My mother, a veteran school social worker, made a quiet but meaningful difference early in my career because she taught me empathy and how to value people allowing you into their homes. As a child, I often accompanied my mother on home visits and watched her talk to people during difficult times in their lives with grace and care. Seeing this early in my life influenced how I later approached my work as a journalist. My mom made many loud and meaningful differences in my life as well, but this quiet act of allowing me to watch her do her job impacted me deeply.”

YAMICHE ALCINDOR, 2021 Matrix Honoree, Washington correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC



“A mosaic of tv news producers, news directors, and assignment editors drove me to the edge. There were few limits to how deep they would let me dig and create. If a story I reported or show I anchored bombed—they would say—it's all part of failing upwards. The very idea that you could still propel forward no matter what you left in your wake—is the magic that can help you soar.”

CHRISTY FERER, 2003 Matrix Honoree, American former TV reporter and style commentator and the founder of two video companies



“The people who have made the biggest impact for me, especially early on, are the ones who tell you like it is, tell you what to expect, and give you actionable feedback. Shelly Lazarus, Chairman Emeritus of Ogilvy & Mather, has been one of those people for me. She has been a mentor throughout my career, from the early days through my transition to CMO. I’m grateful for the mentorship I received from Shelly and the way it has inspired me to pay it forward as a leader.”

ELIZABETH RUTLEDGE, 2022 Matrix Honoree, Chief Marketing Officer, American Express



“I once trudged through a snowstorm to hear Susan Taylor, the legendary editor in chief of *Essence*, speak at a luncheon for the American Society of Magazine Editors because I wanted to help make sure that another woman got a good turnout. Years later when a book I wrote on career success was accepted by a publisher, my editor told me that a big advocate on my behalf was a woman in their PR department who I’d chatted with that day and never saw again. Not only was it lovely of her to do, but it felt like the universe was thanking me for the effort I’d made for another female.”

KATE WHITE, 2003 Matrix Honoree, NY Times bestselling suspense novelist and former editor in chief of Cosmopolitan



DONATE NOW

Small actions create powerful change.

In the spirit of the Matrix Awards and the butterfly effect, your support helps spark opportunities that ripple far beyond a single moment—empowering future leaders in communications through scholarships, mentorship, and access.



NYWICI



MATRIX HALL OF FAME

Every year since 1971, NYWICI has awarded outstanding women in communications the prestigious Matrix Awards. The long list of past winners reads like a who-is-who of exceptional women in the fields of advertising, books, broadcasting, film, magazines, new media, newspapers and public relations and is a true reflection of achievements by women in communications.

2025

Leslie Berland
Teneshia Jackson Warner
Dustee Jenkins
Lucy Kaylin
Nkechi Okoro Carroll
Kristen Welker
Bellamy Young

2024

Kristin Chenoweth
Jill Cress
Nina Garcia
Meredith Kopit Levien
Jennifer Lowney
Nancy Reyes
Rakia Reynolds

2023

Esi Eggleston Bracey
Christine Elliott
Moira Forbes
Maureen J. Reidy
Donna Speciale
Clarissa Ward

2022

Devika Bulchandani
Rita Ferro
Marlee Matlin
Stephanie Mehta
Elizabeth Rutledge
Gwen Stefani
Tiffany R. Warren
Judy Woodruff

2021

Yamiche Alcindor
Awkwafina
Maggie Haberman
Judith Harrison
Hoda Kotb
Dawn Ostroff
Amanda Richman
Marisa Thalberg

2020

Carla Hassan
Ann Lewnes
Barri Rafferty
Tina Tchen*
Carol H. Williams
Linda Yaccarino
Susan Zirinsky

2019

Padma Lakshmi
Kate Lewis
Jeanine D. Liburd
Susan Magrino
Norah O'Donnell
Kathy Ring
Lisa Sherman
Sally Susman

2018

Halle Berry
Mika Brzezinski
Kim Kelleher
Betsy Kenny Lack
Dia Simms
Alexandra Trower
Shelley Zalis
Jodi Kantor, Emily Steel,
and Megan Twohey*

2017

Rukmini Callimachi
Gretchen Carlson
Susan Credle
Savannah Guthrie
Kristin Lemkau
Judy Smith
Nancy Weber

2016

Linda Buff
Nancy Dubuc
Lena Dunham
Nancy Gibbs
Carol Hamilton
Melody Hobson
Liz Kaplow
Janice Min

2015

Kirsten Gillibrand
Debra L. Lee
Andrea Mitchell
Robbie Myers
Martine Reardon
Megan Smith

2014

Wendy Clark
Queen Latifah
Jane Mayer
Cynthia McFadden
Dyllan McGee
Eileen Naughton
Jonelle Procope

2013

Joanna Coles
Anne Finucane
Mindy Grossman
Bonnie Hammer
Jacki Kelley
Audra McDonald
Kara Swisher

2012

Tyra Banks
Gayle Butler
Glenn Close
Maria Cuomo Cole
Ann Curry
Laura Desmond
Zenia Mucha
Peggy Noonan

2011

Cindi Berger
Gwen Ifill
Robin Koval
Idina Menzel
Abbe Raven
Sheryl Sandberg
Gina Sanders
Betty White*

2010

Susan Chira
Sheryl Crow
Tina Fey
Ina Garten
Doris Kearns Goodwin
Anne Keating
Gayle King
Marissa Mayer

2009

Campbell Brown
Leslee Dart
Monica Langley
Dany Levy
S. Epatha Merkerson
Sherrie Rollins Westin
Linda Sawyer
Linda Wells

2008

Joannie C. Danielides
Diane von Furstenberg*
Susan Gianinno
Linda Greenhouse
Ruth Reichl
Robin Roberts
Anna Deavere Smith
Anne Sweeney

2007

Cindy Adams
Lisa Caputo
Joan Didion
Pamela Fiori
Thelma Golden
Susan Lyne
Arianna Huffington
Meredith Vieira

2006

Jill Abramson
Candace Bushnell
Beth Comstock
Geena Davis
Ellen DeGeneres*
Joan Hamburg
Cynthia Leive
Renetta McCann
Katherine Oliver

2005

Christiane Amanpour
Nina DeSesa
Linda Fairstein
Edie Falco
Amy Gross
Wenda Harris Millard
Charlotte Otto
Marjorie Scardino

2000

Candice Carpenter
Ranny Cooper
Patricia Cornwell
Patricia D. Fili-Krushel
Katharine Graham
Judith Jamison
Ann Jackson
Linda Kaplan Thaler

1995

Shelly Lazarus
Carolyn Lee
Patricia Matson
Toni Morrison
Cokie Roberts
Elizabeth Tilberis

1990

Tina Brown
Marian Burros
Phyllis E. Grann
Michelle H. Jordan
Louise McNamee
Lynn Sherr

1985

Barbara Taylor Bradford
Laurel Cutler
Helen Gurley Brown
Eleanor Lambert
Flora Lewis
Mary Alice Williams

1980

Franchellie Cadwell
Suzanne Garment
Frances Fitz Gerald
Barbara Hunter
Pamela Hill
Ruth Whitney

1975

Madeline Amgott
Aileen Corbett
Elizabeth Janeway
Charlotte Klein
Judy Klemesrud
Geraldine Rhoads
Shirley Polykoff

2004

Alix M. Freedman
Ann Fudge
Susan Peterson Kennedy
Nell Merlino
Martha Nelson
Bernadette Peters
Debra Shriver
Paula Zahn

1999

Katie Couric
Esther Dyson
Joyce Hergenhan
Dorothy Kalins
Debbie A. Krenek
Linda Srere
Meryl Streep
Nan Talese

1994

Gail Blanke
Maureen Dowd
Sarah Frank
Mary Ellen Mark
Ann S. Moore
Naomi Wolf
Ruth A. Wooden

1989

Kim Armstrong
Gail Collins
Nancy Evans
Frances Friedman
Ellen Levine
Betty Rollin

1984

Susan Brownmiller
Tamara K. Homer
Judy Lynn Prince
Enid Nemy
Patricia Ryan
Diane Sawyer

1979

Betty Furness
Marcia Ann Gillespie
Joan Lipton
Elaine R. Pitts
Harriet Rabb
Barbara Tuchman
Barbara Yuncker

1974

Shana Alexander
Charlotte Curtis
Susanne Loeb
Joan Murray
Rita Sands

2003

Christy A. Ferer*
Gretchen C. Morgenson
Sheila Nevins
Maurie Perl
Carolyn K. Reidy
Jane Rosenthal
Daisy Expósito-Ulla
Kate White

1998

Pilar Crespi
Anthea Disney
Phyllis McGrady
Bette Midler
Sally Minard
Janet Robinson
Rochelle Udell

1993

Jean L. Farinelli
Paula Forman
Jacqueline McCord Leo
Penny Marshall
Terry McMillan
Lesley Stahl
Alessandra Stanley

1988

Myrna Blyth
Carolyn Carter
Marilyn Laurie
Anna Quindlen
Carolyn Wall
Genevieve Young

1983

Maya Angelou
Kay Koplovitz
Patricia Martin
Mary McGrory
Jane Bryant Quinn
Charlotte Kelly Veal

1978

Rena R. Bartos
Jane E. Brody
Patricia Carbine
Dr. Dorothy Gregg
Barbara Seaman
Barbara Walters

1973

Jo Foxworth
Sondra Gorney
Lucy Jarvis
Eileen Shanahan
Gail Sheehy

2002

Carole Black
Peggy Conlon
Eve Ensler
Kati Marton
Helen Thomas
Madeline de Vries
Meg Whitman
Anna Wintour

1997

Red Burns
Nora Ephron
Anne Sutherland Fuchs
Betty Hudson
Laura Landro
Esther R. Newberg
Rosie O'Donnell
Mary Lou Quinlan

1992

Sylvia Chase
Fredrica S. Friedman
Lou Rena Hammond
Callie Khourie
Elizabeth Valk Long
Aileen Mehle
Helayne Spivak

1987

Margaret Booth
Jane Pauley
Elaine S. Reiss
Beverly Stephen
Susan L. Taylor
Wendy Weil

1982

Karen W. Arenson
Cathleen P. Black
Caroline R. Jones
Joyce Carol Oates
Jeannette E. Paladino
Kay J. Wight

1977

Ann Berk
Beatrice Buckler
Gloria Emerson
Muriel Fox
Ada Louise Huxtable
Nadeen Peterson

1972

Mary Andrews Ayres
Marylin Bender
Pat Coffin
Melba Toliver

2001

Andrea Alstrup
Judy Corman
Jane Friedman
Joanne Lipman
Judy McGrath
Valerie McGambier
Lois Smith
Pamela Thomas-Graham

1996

Charlotte Beers
Whoopi Goldberg
Geraldine Laybourne
Liz Smith
Martha Stewart
Amy Tan
Patrice Tanaka

1991

Penny Hawkey
Karen Elliott House
Annie Leibovitz
Joan Lunden
Grace Mirabella
Lynn Nesbit
Terrie Williams

1986

Dorothea M. Brooks
Meredith Fernstrom
Charlayne Hunter-Gault
Kate Rand Lloyd
Marcella Rosen
Alice Walker

1981

Letitia Baldrige
Judith Daniels
Beth Fallon
Pegeen Fitzgerald
Jane Brown Maas
Letty Cottin Pogrebin

1976

Gay Pauley
Sylvia Porter
Lynn Povich
Marlene Sanders
Jean Schoonover
June Thursh

1971

Gloria Steinem
Theo Wilson

*Special Award



NYWICI

NEW YORK WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS PAST PRESIDENTS

2025.....Brandi Boatner	2006-2007Betsy Morgan*	1983-1984.....Madeline Amgott*
2024Laura Brusca	2005-2006Jyll Holzman	1982-1983Carolyn Carter*
2023.....Georgia Galanoudis	2005-2006Betsy Morgan*	1981-1982.....Dr. Dorothy E. Gregg*
2021-2022Dustee Jenkins	2004-2005Joannie Danielides	1980-1981Mary Jane O’Neill*
2020-2021Ashley Miles	2004-2005Jyll Holzman*	1979-1980Nancy L. Tschirart*
2018-2020Judith Harrison	2003-2004Gail Blanke	1978-1979Jane Levere*
2017-2018Meredith Long	2003-2004Joannie Danielides*	1977-1978.....Barbara Smith*
2016-2017Jacki Kelley	2002-2003.....Debra Shriver	1976-1977Angela Tedesco*
2015-2016Linda Descano	2002-2003.....Patrice Tanaka*	1974-1976.....Joan Lipton*
2015-2016Kim Kelleher*	2001-2002.....Eileen Ast	1973-1974.....Marlene Sanders*
2014-2015Judith Harrison	2001-2002.....Debra Shriver*	1971-1973.....Sibby Christensen*
2014-2015Linda Descano*	2000-2001Mary Lou Quinlan*	1970-1971Marcia Powell*
2013-2014.....Judith Harrison	1999-2000Elizabeth Crow*	1968-1970Pat Ludorf*
2013-2014.....Liz Kaplow*	1998-1999.....Barbara Brennan*	1967-1968Dorothy Hopkins*
2012-2013.....Susan Schulz	1997-1998Jacqueline Leo*	1965-1967Anita Diamant Berke*
2012-2013.....Nancy Weber*	1996-1997Charlotte Tomic*	1964-1965.....Dorothy Hopkins*
2011-2012.....Susan Schulz	1995-1996.....Lynn Osborne*	1962-1964.....Charlotte Friel*
2011-2012.....Catherine Mathis*	1994-1995.....Susan Gessner*	1960-1962.....Ida Sioan Snyder*
2010-2011.....Joan Cear	1993-1994.....Eileen Roper Ast*	1958-1960.....Mary Osborne*
2010-2011.....Linda Kaplan Thaler*	1992-1993Patricia O’Connell*	1956-1958Lucile D. Kirk*
2009-2010.....Joan Cear	1991-1992.....Fortuna Calvo-Roth*	1954-1956Lorraine E. Simmons*
2009-2010.....Denise Warren*	1990-1991Phyllis Kerle*	1952-1954Ruth K. Mumbauer*
2008-2009Kristine Welker	1989-1990Myrna Blyth*	1950-1952Helen Staeuble*
2008-2009Nancy Rabstajnek Nichols*	1987-1989Mimi Bloomberg Harmon*	1948-1950Sunny Charif*
2007-2008.....Betsy Morgan	1986-1987Marilyn M. Bockman*	
2007-2008.....Kristine Welker*	1985-1986Teresa A. Zimmerer*	
2006-2007Nancy Rabstajnek Nichols*	1984-1985Mary P. Manilla*	

*NYWICI Operating Board President





REFLECTIONS FROM NYWICI PAST PRESIDENTS

What role do communities like NYWICI play in creating ripple effects across our industry?



“Bringing together leaders from across industries who are united around empowering one another is truly special—and it’s central to NYWICI’s DNA. NYWICI is a sisterhood that meets each member where she is, welcoming her with open arms and walking alongside her throughout her journey. That support doesn’t stay within the community’s walls. It creates a ripple effect across the industry as members carry that confidence, mentorship, and sense of belonging back into their organizations. By elevating women at every stage of their careers, NYWICI helps shape more inclusive leadership, stronger networks, and a culture where women are empowered not just to succeed, but to lift others as they rise.”

LAURA BRUSCA, 2023-2024 NYWICI Past President | Chief Communications Officer, Forbes



“Communities like New York Women in Communications create ripple effects across the advertising industry by connecting women to mentorship, opportunity, and influence—ensuring that leadership pipelines are stronger and more representative at every level. By fostering cross-generational support, skill-building, and access to powerful networks, NYWICI empowers women at every stage of their careers to rise, lead, and in turn, open doors for others. It has been a privilege to be part of this community for many years!”

JACKI KELLEY, 2016-2017 NYWICI Past President | Chief Client and Business Officer, Omnicom



“There’s a butterfly effect to what NYWICI has built over the decades. NYWICI connects and circulates inspiration from the greats—from Gloria Steinem, Meryl Streep, and Toni Morrison to young talents entering the workforce—putting women in the driver’s seat in business, media, and communications.”

ASHLEY MILES, 2020-2021 NYWICI Past President | Founder & CEO, Franklyn West



“When I think of NYWICI’s butterfly effect, I think of young professional mentees as chrysalises, building new communication and networking skills. They transform into butterflies with leadership training opportunities gained via committee involvement and program learning. And finally, they spread their wings as they move into NYWICI board and other leadership roles, each supporting and mentoring others in their careers. The cycle is complete yet constantly repeated.”

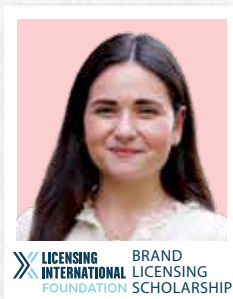
E. LYNN OSBORNE, 1995-1996 NYWICI Past President



“NYWICI is a powerful sisterhood whose individual and collective actions, like the beating of a butterfly’s wings, can affect climatic changes half a hemisphere away. The support and nurturing I’ve received from NYWICI over 30 years is what led me to my work today, helping individuals across America and from Asia to Africa discover and actively live their life purpose and leverage their talent, expertise, and passion in service of other people and our planet. And, together, creating a more equitable, inclusive, and joyful planet.”

PATRICE TANAKA, 2002-2003 Past President and 1996 Past Matrix Honoree | Founder & Chief Joy Officer, Joyful Planet LLC and Joyful Planet Foundation

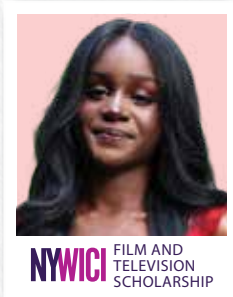
2026 NYWICI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



MELANIE AUDRAIN is a French-American Master of Science student in Strategic Communication at Columbia University's School of Professional Studies. She previously earned a Bachelor of Commerce in International Management from McGill University's Desautels Faculty of Management.

Melanie brings professional experience in toy product marketing at Mattel, as well as communications and marketing roles across the education, banking, and pharmaceutical industries. Through these varied experiences, she has developed a strong curiosity about how brands use impactful communication strategies to build cultural relevance and connection.

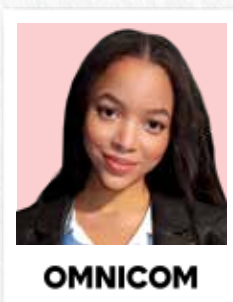
Passionate about giving back, Melanie deeply values community and collective support, and believes they are essential to achieving both individual growth and shared success.



MORGAN BRYANT is a sophomore at Columbia University majoring in Film and Media Studies with a minor in Human Rights. She writes and directs short films, including *Hot Comb*, which screened at the Lowlight Film Festival. She also helped organize the festival through Columbia's Undergraduate Production House, Studio292, as part of its marketing team.

Morgan has held an outreach and production internship at RadicalMedia and worked as a production assistant/writer for *She's SINGLE Magazine* and its film division, ASIAS FILMS. She is a Kluge Scholar within Columbia's Undergraduate Scholars Program, where she participates in enrichment opportunities.

Currently, Morgan is directing her original short film *M.O.L.E. (More or Less Equals)* and developing a television script inspired by her summer research. She also helps coordinate literary readings and creative gatherings on campus. When the weather is nice, she enjoys journaling and playing the violin in her local park.



LAURA BING is a Strategic Communication graduate student at Columbia University with a passion for storytelling and advocacy. She holds a 4.0 GPA from Rutgers University, where she double majored in English and Political Science.

Her path to communications is deeply personal. Growing up as the younger sibling to a late-speaking older sister, Laura became the natural voice for her family, a role that evolved into a commitment to helping others feel heard. That instinct carried into her work at Rutgers, where she co-founded OverRide, a 50-member coalition advocating for transportation reform, working on strategic messaging, and stakeholder engagement.

Currently, Laura works as a Communications & Digital Strategy Intern, developing content to raise audience awareness. She is especially drawn to ethical communication and the responsibility communicators have to consider audience, cultural context, and representation, a responsibility she intends to carry into her work.



KAYLA CUNANAN is originally from California and is now based in New York City, where she is pursuing her master's degree in Integrated Marketing at NYU. She earned her bachelor's degree in Marketing from San Diego State University and has since built a career that spans both creative and business disciplines. A freelance photographer and business owner, Kayla is also the co-founder of the nonprofit Women in Business Collective, which is dedicated to empowering and connecting the next generation of female leaders. She is an active member of NYWICI, where she continues to grow within a strong network of women in communications.


Kayla leads with creativity, curiosity, and a strong growth mindset, always seeking the silver lining and ways to turn ideas into something meaningful, whether through visual storytelling or community building. Long term, she aspires to continue growing as a marketing professional and ultimately become a professor, sharing knowledge, experience, and opportunities with others.



THE BEVERLY WETTENSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

NITARA DEHIWALALIYANAGE is a junior at Hunter College, CUNY, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing and Business Management for Media. She is a creative storyteller with a passion for digital media, photography, and multicultural marketing. On campus, Nitara hosts her own radio show, *POV You're a POC*, where she highlights diverse voices and perspectives. She also works as a Student Ambassador and College Assistant in the Office of Alumni Relations, leading campus tours and supporting engagement initiatives. Previously, she served as Vice President of Hunter's Asian Student Union, helping lead programming and student involvement. Beyond campus, Nitara has gained experience as an Art Director with HBO's Pa'lante program and as a Social Media Specialist at the Tribeca Film Festival. This summer, she will join Port Authority as a Photo and Video Intern, continuing to grow her creative and professional portfolio.



THE TRAILBLAZER SCHOLARSHIP 

AMEN RUTH GALINATO is a student journalist studying Political Science and Journalism at Stony Brook University and is set to graduate in May 2027. She currently serves as Managing Editor of her school newspaper, *The Statesman*, and holds roles as a Community Engagement Intern at ABC 7 NY and an Editorial and Design Assistant at the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics. Through her work, Amen is committed to representing underrepresented communities and amplifying unique perspectives through thoughtful, impactful storytelling.

When she's not reporting, writing, or editing, Amen enjoys reading novels and watching A24 films. Her favorite authors include Joan Didion, James Baldwin, bell hooks, and Donna Tartt. Raised in Upstate New York, she aspires to become an investigative journalist, professor, and author. Her guiding motto is: "Be the person you needed when you were younger."





VICTORIA GUTHRIE is a current junior at Fordham University, majoring in Film. She is highly interested in creating and directing her own psychological thriller film, as well as furthering her education in marketing and creating film trailers. Throughout her educational career, she has immersed herself in clubs and organizations, including the filmmaking club. She is also a proud member of her school's Lambda Pi Eta Chapter, which has further developed her curiosity about the industry. She is deeply grateful for the opportunities she's had within the film industry and looks forward to engaging in future opportunities through NYWICI and with film companies she encounters along the way.



 BOARD OF DIRECTORS SCHOLARSHIP

ANGELINA ISPIR is a multimedia journalist and graduate student at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, where she concentrates on local accountability reporting. Her work spans international affairs, New York City politics, and community-driven stories, with bylines in outlets including the *Mott Haven Herald* and *The Monitor*.

She holds a degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communications from Marymount Manhattan College, where she also gained experience working in city government and served as a Youth Delegate to the United Nations.

A first-generation college graduate of Puerto Rican descent, Angelina is deeply committed to amplifying underrepresented voices in New York. She brings a thoughtful, people-first approach to her reporting and aspires to grow as a "news creative" in today's evolving media land.



 THE ESPERANZA SCHOLARSHIP

SANAA JIMENEZ is a sophomore at Ithaca College pursuing dual degrees in Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing Communications, and Psychology. A New York City native, she is a creative communicator at heart, blending cultural insight with strategic communication to create impactful, community-centered media.

On campus, Sanaa serves as a Resident Assistant, Co-President of Students of Caribbean Association, and Director of Media for Voices of Equity at Ithaca College, where she leads digital strategy, produces campaigns, and amplifies underrepresented voices. She has also developed PR campaigns, led workshops for over 100 students, and contributed to national communications initiatives through her volunteerism.

Sanaa aims to build a career in communications, consumer behavior, and brand strategy, using tools she's learned over time for representation, connection, and social impact.



dentsu

KERI KALEJA is a full-time professional and graduate student in NYU’s M.S. in Integrated Marketing program, where she is preparing for leadership roles in communications and marketing. Her experience spans hospitality, diplomacy, legal operations, music, and brand storytelling, shaping her into a thoughtful communicator who pairs creative instinct with operational rigor.

Balancing full-time work with graduate studies, Keri has developed a strong interest in how Agentic AI, AEO, GEO, and the evolving share of models are transforming the communications landscape. She is particularly drawn to the opportunities and responsibilities—these shifts present for brands, marketers, and future industry leaders.

Through coursework, industry engagement, and applied projects, Keri continues to grow as a strategic thinker committed to innovation, meaningful connection, and lifelong learning. She is passionate about using her voice, experience, and perspective to help build a stronger, more supportive future for women in communications.



d'expósito & Partners THE ESPERANZA SCHOLARSHIP

JESSICA KENNY is a junior at Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick pursuing a degree in Supply Chain Management and Marketing. She is passionate about the intersection of business strategy and communications, particularly how brands build trust through authentic storytelling. Jessica previously interned at Colgate-Palmolive as a Global Supply Chain Intern, where she developed an interest in the consumer packaged goods industry and the role of communication in connecting products to consumers.

At Rutgers, she is deeply committed to leadership and mentorship, earning recognition through the Rutgers Women in Business Scholarship and the Jane N. Goldman Honoree Award for supporting young women transitioning into college. As an aspiring professional, Jessica is excited to contribute to the industry by sharing insights on the intersection of business and storytelling while empowering other women to pursue careers in the industry.



LICENSING INTERNATIONAL BRAND LICENSING FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

EMILY OWENS is a student at Fordham University’s Gabelli School of Business, pursuing a degree in Global Business with a concentration in marketing, consumer insights, and strategic branding. As a member of the Global Business Honors Program and Marketing Scholars, she has developed a strong interest in how effective communication shapes brands and builds meaningful connections with audiences.

Emily aspires to work in brand management within the CPG industry and is particularly drawn to the licensing space, where storytelling and strategy converge to bring brands to life. She is fascinated by the ways branding and licensing create compelling narratives that resonate deeply with consumers.

A recipient of a collegiate communications award, Emily is recognized for her thoughtful, clear, and authentic voice, with a natural ability to translate complex ideas into engaging and accessible stories.



um

LILLIE NYE is a junior at Penn State University majoring in Public Relations and is originally from Upstate New York. She aspires to work in corporate PR, helping businesses expand their audiences and make a lasting impact on the customers they serve.

One of Lillie’s favorite parts of attending Penn State is the wide range of opportunities available to students—from clubs and philanthropies to athletics, career resources, and beyond. With the communications field constantly evolving, she is passionate about continuous learning, and NYWICI has become one of her favorite ways to grow outside the classroom. She especially enjoys listening to NYWICI podcasts while studying or walking to class.

Outside of academics, Lillie competes and practices with the Penn State Club Figure Skating and Cross-Country teams. During the summer months, she enjoys spending time in the Adirondacks hiking with her family and visiting Lake George with her grandparents.





NYWICI PAST PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP

SAMANTHA ROSINSKI is a student filmmaker from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, dedicated to using storytelling as a tool for community impact. After graduating from a Career and Technical Education multimedia high school program, where she earned two NATAS Mid-Atlantic Student Production Awards and placed second nationally at Skills USA, she is continuing her studies at Chapman University as a Film & Television Production major. Her work focuses on amplifying underrepresented voices, from assistant editing Emmy®-winning television to producing social impact media for nonprofits like the Bucks County Opportunity Council, Project SEARCH, and Surgicorps International in Lusaka, Zambia. Through internships across development, production, and post-production at leading commercial production companies in LA, Samantha is also pursuing a career as a post producer. Samantha is committed to pursuing her dream career while creating work that inspires meaningful change.



THE BEVERLY WETTENSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

VANESSA SCHIMONY is a sophomore at Syracuse University studying broadcast and digital journalism. Originally from outside Philadelphia, she brings a strong passion for creativity, self-expression, and continuous learning to her work. Vanessa enjoys connecting with people in all settings and is deeply committed to telling meaningful stories.

She has found her calling in amplifying voices and ensuring people feel heard—something she considers the most fulfilling aspect of storytelling. Whether covering local news, hard news, or broader national stories with a local lens, Vanessa is driven by a genuine curiosity about people and their experiences.

After graduation, she hopes to pursue a career in investigative journalism, arts and culture, or finance reporting.



OMNICOM

HANNAH SMITH is a junior at the University of Rochester pursuing a B.A. in English with minors in Digital Media Studies and Music Performance. On campus, she serves as Features Editor of the *Campus Times* and anchors for WRUR-TV, where she created and hosted *UR Sports Zone*, a web-based sports broadcast. Hannah also volunteers as a Student Alumni Ambassador, strengthening connections between students and alumni.

Beyond student-led media, she works as a Student Content Creator for the University's Marketing and Communications team, producing multimedia content for URochester's flagship social media platforms and contributing to campuswide digital storytelling.

Hannah has also gained professional experience in the Rochester media landscape, serving as a Broadcast News Intern at News 8 WROC-TV ('26) and WXXI Public Broadcasting ('25), airing a piece on *All Things Considered*. Passionate about communications, she specializes in multimedia journalism, blending video, audio, and written reporting to engage audiences.



KAPLOW

MADELINE WINES is a sophomore at Boston University studying public relations in the College of Communication, with a minor in innovation and entrepreneurship from the Questrom School of Business. Currently, Madeline serves as co-agency director of Unleashed PR, a PRSSA-affiliated, student-run firm, where she oversees all agency operations for 50+ members and manages both client-facing and internal teams. She is also an account supervisor at PRLab, the nation's oldest student-run PR firm, where she leads a team of executives and drives strategy for nonprofit client REBELS.

Madeline has gained experience across corporate and nonprofit sectors in her home state of Connecticut, including a marketing internship at Defibtech, where she executed a national-level campaign, and a communications internship at Shoreline Arts Alliance. Madeline has maintained a spot on the dean's list each semester and is passionate about using strategic communications to drive impact for mission-driven and innovative organizations.



2026 SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIPS

New York Women in Communications awards scholarships each year as part of our mission to empower future generations in the communications field. Most are named, or sponsored, awards supported by corporations or foundations that retain the right to impose certain criteria that may include, but not be limited to, a declared major, internship availability, year in school, personal background.



THE BEVERLY WETTENSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

"Celebrate Women Every Day and Make History!" was the message and mission of Beverly Wettenstein. Beverly was a national speaker, award-winning journalist, author, active NYWIC member, women's advocate, and historian who focused on the news coverage of women and women's issues. This scholarship is awarded annually in her name to a student pursuing a career in journalism with an interest in telling women's stories.



THE BRAND LICENSING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDED BY LICENSING INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Awarded to a deserving individual who has an interest in a career in brand licensing. Majors could include advertising, marketing, design and other brand licensing industry-related programs.



THE DENTSU SCHOLARSHIP

The Dentsu Scholarship supports aspiring leaders in communications—students passionate about advertising, marketing, media, and related fields. Recipients are recognized for academic achievement, leadership, and commitment to driving the industry forward.



THE ESPERANZA SCHOLARSHIP

The Esperanza Scholarship is sponsored by Daisy Expósito-Ulla, Partner/President-CEO of d expósito & Partners. It is awarded to a student of Hispanic heritage pursuing the dream of a career in communications.



THE JPMORGANCHASE SCHOLARSHIP

The JPMorganChase Scholarship is a beacon of opportunity, awarded to exceptional and diverse college juniors and seniors who exemplify academic excellence and a fervent passion for marketing and communications in the finance sector. JPMorganChase is committed to empowering the next generation of leaders and opening doors to more possibilities in the world of finance.



THE KAPLOW SCHOLARSHIP

The Kaplow Scholarship is awarded to a student who is a rising college sophomore, junior, or senior and nurturing their career in marketing communications or public relations. The Kaplow Scholarship includes training and mentorship to set the foundation for achieving success in an entry-level role and beyond.



THE OMNICOM SCHOLARSHIP

The Omnicom Scholarship is awarded to a student who is a rising college junior, senior, or graduate student and has demonstrated an interest in a career in communications.



NYWICI
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
SCHOLARSHIP

THE NYWICI BOARD OF DIRECTORS SCHOLARSHIP

Funded by the collective generosity and commitment of the NYWICI Board of Directors and is designed to support emerging leaders at the early stages of their careers. This scholarship reflects the Board's dedication to investing in the next generation by helping young people access education, professional development, and career-building opportunities that may otherwise be out of reach. Recipients are selected based on their potential, passion, and commitment to growth, and the scholarship aims to reduce financial barriers while empowering recipients to pursue their goals with confidence. Through this investment, the Board of Directors affirms its belief that supporting young talent today strengthens the future of the profession and the broader community.

NYWICI
FILM AND
TELEVISION
SCHOLARSHIP

THE NYWICI FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOLARSHIP

The NYWICI Film and Television Scholarship is awarded to a deserving individual who has an interest in film or television and who is pursuing a career either in front or behind the camera.

NYWICI
PAST
PRESIDENTS'
SCHOLARSHIP

THE NYWICI PAST PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP

Awarded in the spirit of New York Women in Communications Past Presidents, this annual scholarship is supported by contributions from individuals who have served as NYWICI President. The recipient is a rising college junior or senior who is pursuing a career in the communications field. The recipient must demonstrate effective leadership abilities and an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit in all aspects of their life and have a track record of engagement within NYWICI. The ideal recipient has the drive and potential to be a future NYWICI President.

**THE TRAILBLAZER
SCHOLARSHIP**


THE TRAILBLAZER SCHOLARSHIP

Sponsored by Disney Advertising, the Trailblazer Scholarship is awarded to a college junior or senior who is passionate about creative storytelling and seeks opportunities to innovate, inspire, and ignite movement. This scholarship celebrates the next generation of leaders looking to make their unique mark across the communications, advertising, public relations, marketing, or other industry-related field.



THE UM SCHOLARSHIP

The UM Scholarship supports aspiring leaders in media and communications students passionate about the strategic and analytical side of advertising; as well as media planning and buying. Recipients are recognized for academic achievement, leadership, and commitment to driving the industry forward.



THE YAHOO SCHOLARSHIP

The Yahoo Scholarship aims to empower the next generation of communications and marketing leaders. This scholarship is awarded to a college undergraduate who is passionate about storytelling at the intersection of these fields. It celebrates the next generation of leaders looking to make an impact and seeking opportunities that integrate social media, innovation including AI, and new technology into their career.

SELECTION PROCESS Recipients are chosen by the New York Women in Communications Scholarship Committee based on academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, participation in school and community-service activities, honors, and other awards or recognition, work experience, and statement of goals and aspirations. Need and unusual personal and/or family circumstances are also considered.

SCHOLARSHIP HALL OF FAME

2025

Brittan C. Alexander
Ashley T. Craig
Leah Dannehy
Hande Erkan
Rosie Fellig
Janelle T. Harris
O'Shay L. Jelks
Dorothy Kam
Marguerite (Maggie) L. Kocsmiersky
Kai Lincke
Sidney A. Newell
Shayla Sanchez
Rosamelia Sánchez Lara
Sofia Storrow
Paloma A. Thoen
Madeline M. Vaja
Nia S. Watson

2024

Jordan Fong
Skylar Grady
Candace Guthrie
Britney Huston
Avery Loftis
Katrina Machetta
Jules Maluenda
Sarah Ng
Arion Peterson
Rosamelia Sánchez Lara
Laila Wilson



2023

Kadija Abdoulaye
Talia Barrington
Brianna Boone
Joyce Chen
Amanda Dait
Laine Dubin
Gabriela Enriquez
Stoikow
Lilli Iannella
Molly Jacob
Aaliyah Simone Kellogg
Laura Uzar

2022

Kaitlin Balasaygun
Brianna Boone
Anna Catherman
Liset Cruz
Hande Erkan
Hasina Foye
Jenna Hallam
Hannah Hocom
Molly Jacob
Ashanti Johnson
Jane Kim
Bec Legato
Yamila Martinez
Sarah Ng
Ephemia Nikolakis
Avery Virkler
Sasha Wayman
Nora Wesson

2021

Adonisa Bob-Grey
Paloma Camacho
Krystle Fajardo
Beatrice Forman
Hannah Garcia
Amanda Gordon
Vanessa Handy
Yamila Martinez
Maria Thames

2020

Hailey Aldrich
Gabriella Conway
Yamila Frej
Victoria Giardina
Amanda Gordon
Anna Harris
Taffy Lashley
Drashti Mehta
Godlyse Mahungu
Brooke Salamone
Ellis Stewart
Elizabeth Sugar
Daejah Woolery

2019

Natalia Castelan
Paula Chirinos
Lily Coltoff
Rachel Frank
Kayla Jennings-Rivera
Felicia LaLomia
Sarah Lynch
Ingrid Nin
Janie Peacock
Danielle Pluchinsky
Sena Pottackal
Ciara Rolle-Harris
Nicole Thorne
Leigh Anne Tiffany

2018

Danielle Allentuck
Nicole Bruno
Tia Di Salvo
Jillian Forstadt
Meghan Hayfield
Katie Holzman
Jazmin Kay
Taffy Lashley
Emme Leong
Amanda Livingston
Sabrina Maggiore
Sarah Matusek
Azaleah Peterson
Lena Reilly
Guneet Singh
Jessica Smith
Mirelle Tinker
Nina Trach
Delaney Wehn
Alexis White

2017

Schania Anderson
Alana Battalino
Emma Beltrandi
Alison Bonaviso
Lauren Dana
Stephana Eghan
Anna Gardner
Jacqueline Homan
Jazmin Kay
Jenn Lavelle
Sarah Lynch
Emma Noblesala
Chinyelu Onuora
Melynda Payne
Janie Peacock
Kyra Richardson
Maylan Studart
Jennifer Walsh
Alexis White

2016

Laura Amato
Zainub Amir
Katie Baldwin
Chelsea Cirruzzo
Naomi Ducat
Lauren Dugan
Anna Gardner
Meghan Grau
Alison Hartley
Katherine Hernandez
Kathryn Hornyak
Cynthia Huasipoma
Allison Latini
Alanna McCatty
Kimberly Pena
Gabrielle Reese
Isabella Sarlo
Casey Silvestri
Allison Waddington
Allison Wahl
Hilary Wojtowicz
Rachel Zuckerman

2015

Elena DeLuccia
Naomi Ducat
Salihah Evans
Erika Evleth
Nicole Gartner
Kendal Lambert
Ariel Litovsky
Julia Livesey
Aziza Kibibi McGill
Amanda Morris
Leticia Moya
Cindy Nguyen
Meg Omecene
Kia Robinson
Taylor Sassman
Casey Silvestri
Leigh Anne Tiffany
Joanna Ventour

2014

Stephanie Agresti
KarYee Au
Gina DeCagna
Molly Gamache
Nicole Godreau
Katelyn Guaitieri
Lauren Hard
Bridget Jackson
Kristine Mamanta
Alanna McCatty
Amanda Morris
Alexandra Osten
Vanessa Powell
Brooke Sassman
Sovanndary Sok
Elisa Tang
Opal Vadhan
Melissa Vargas

2013

Claudia Balthazar
Julia Corbett
Amanda Kontor
Kendal Lambert
Amanda Livingston
Arielle Martinez
Sonya Mattis
Vivian Nunez
Ann Panousopoulos
Marisch Perera
Blaire Pistoia
Emily-Anne Rigal
Ayden Rosenberg
Lauren Ryan
Brooke Sassman
Ashley Schwartz
Opal Vadhan
Camden Weber

2012

Alexandra Carmichael
Katia Diaz
Laura Foti
Luisa Garcia
Grace Gavilanes
Melanie Hicken
Nkechi Hooper
Sarah Kajani
Elisa Mala
Marian Omidiji
Marisch Perera
Jamie Primeau
Tess Quinlan
Lauren Ryan
Ilyssa Simsek
Nkiruka Umegbolu
Miriam Ward
Jenny Xie

2011

Jacqueline Bryk
Alexandria Clarke
Katie Corrado
Camille D'Elia
Shira Engel
Luisa Garcia
Amanda Ferrarotto
Luisa Garcia
Stephanie Guzmán
Mariama Keita
Zoe King
Camille McMorro
Ivellisse Morales
Queen Muse
Cherelle Nicholson
Eunic Ortiz
Natasha Spedalle
Anna Sussman
Miriam Ward

2010

Stephanie Aaron
Katie Corrado
Shira Engel
Amanda Ferrarotto
Natifia Gaines
Samantha Gordon
Stephanie Guzmán
Megan Hess
Denise Horn
Amelia Jiménez
Diana Lau
Emellie O'Brien
Chelsea Orcutt
Amanda Quick
Tess Quinlan
Taylor Trudon
Eva Werk
Jie Jenny Zhou

2009

Marie Dugo
Nina Marie Elias
Emily Freisher
Maggie Groves
Kristen Joerger
Rachel Johnson
Carol Kuruvilla
Kayla LeGoff
Sydney Lowe
Miki Onwudingo
Chelsea Orcutt
Kelli Plasket
Charlotte Schaefer
Sara Spruch
Feiner
Elizabeth Stoltz
Kaitlin Tambuscio
Taylor Trudon

2008

Aisha Al-Muslim
Cailin Barrett-Bressack
Katie Corrado
Marie Dugo
Vanessa Garcia
Katerina Gkionis
Najlah Hicks
Cristin Johnson
Sabira Lakhani
Francesca Larson
Cate Mahoney
Michele Meshover
Samantha Neugebauer
Jennifer Pelly
Kelli Plasket
Dana Rivera
Jennifer Rizzi
Stefania Sainato
Sarah Stapperfenne
Natalie Tolle
Jestine Ware
Whitney Young

2007

Oulimata Ba
Kristin Bradley
Christen Brandt
Aimee Campbell
Samantha Davis
Kaitlyn Dreyling
Marie Dugo
Meredith Engel
Ya-Hsuan Huang
Kimberly Laughman
Noelle McKenzie
Jennifer Pelly
Elizabeth Pelly
Jessica Prince
Selena Shen
Chelsea Theis
Emily Warne

2006

Lindsay Adler
Gina Aflalo
Samantha Davis
Sheena Fisher
Lauren Horn
Colleen Huysman
Nancy Lan
Kimberly Last
Joanika Leblanc
Ana Liss
Lauren Little
Kaitlyn Moore
Olivia Ner
Irene Razon
Alexis Taylor
Tammy Tibbetts
Jamie Tomczuk
Elizabeth VanDurne

2005

Rima Abdalkader
Larae Booker
Sharon Clott
Lisa DiGuglielmo
Jennifer L. Elliott
Denise Horn
Elana Jacobs
Lauren Mack
Beatriz Melendez
Ilana Plen
Lavina Ramchandani
Tammy Tibbetts
Beth Young
Anna Youngquist
Laura Zirinsky

2004

Genevieve Byrd
Kristen Carter
Lauren Gould
Nellie Hsu
Sherice Hughey
Cady Johnson
Miriam Kriegel
Joanika Leblanc
Meredith Levin
Denise Martinez
Christy-Ann Waterman

2003

Rima Abdalkader
Candice Crystal
Arlette Daluz
Maria Graves
Daphra Holder
Allison Kapner
Kimberly Last
Stephanie Riesenman
Priya Shah

2002

Jessica Fiore
Tanya Gingerich
Jodi Gold
Rachel Grijalvo
Bianca Janosevic
Erin Monteiro
Jade Scipioni
Marianne Tabar

2001

Kafi Brown
Julia Cotton
Sharon Ehm
Irina Finerman
Aya Karpinska
Mary Ruth Kasprzyk
Christine Kontrafouris
Jennifer McCoy
Amy Peddycord
Lauren Punaro
Margaret Williams

2000

Christina Berchini
Lenora Pi-Lan Chu
Suzanne Copsy
Sharon Ehm
Sedona Fitzgerald
Maya Gorton
Ysanne Harper
Hedi Hong
Vesna Jaksic
Rachelle Jones
Sara Leeder
Stacey Patton
Kristen Telker

1999

Camille Clarke
Charlyn Zlotnick

1998

Kristen DeGroot
Christine Haughey
Lori Moffett
Cynthia Patson
LaTisha Robinson

PAST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS REFLECTIONS

In What Ways Do You See the Ripple Effects of the Receipt of a NYWICI Scholarship Showing Up In Your Career Today?



“As a 2004 NYWICI scholarship recipient, I gained mentorship, internship experience, and tuition support that increased my confidence and allowed me to embrace the fact that I could create the career of my dreams. I used that energy to fuel my path, becoming a Head Writer at 21 years old, writing and producing for my favorite shows through the years and ultimately stepping forward as an Executive Producer, Entrepreneur, and Educator. I am grateful to NYWICI for affirming my voice and opening the door for me to affirm our future leaders.”

KRISTEN V. CARTER | 2004 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient
Award-winning Multimedia Executive Producer, Speaker & Educator



“Receiving the IPG Scholarship from NYWICI in 2023 has reinforced my commitment to strategic communications and pushed me to actively pursue industry learning opportunities that inform my work today. That influence shows up in my hands on SEO work, where I use keyword research, performance reporting, and content optimization to make data informed decisions that improve visibility and engagement. It also shaped my focus on collaboration and professional involvement, which I carry into collaborative work across departments, industry events, and continued skill development.”

JOYCE CHEN | 2023 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient | SEO Associate at SEOM Interactive



“My NYWICI scholarship and connections helped me land my first internship at NBCUniversal in 2009, and I’ve been at the company ever since. That summer in the NBC News Media Relations department helped solidify my passions for news and for communications, gave me exposure to a corporate environment so I could start to refine my presence, and laid the foundation for my NBCU Rolodex that allowed me to secure another internship, a spot in the highly competitive Page Program, and a 14-year career in various roles across the portfolio. It would be impossible to not give credit to NYWICI for my current career!”

MARIE DILEMANI | 2007, 2008, 2009 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient
VP, Marketing & Comms | Social Impact, NBCUniversal



“I was fortunate enough to win two NYWICI Scholarships, one when I was a senior in high school and then another in my sophomore year of college. Outside of the financial benefit, I felt welcomed into this fold of remarkable women who have been a constant sounding board for me throughout my studies and my early career. The women I’ve met through NYWICI have provided feedback on my resumes, taken introductory meetings or calls with me to talk with me about their careers and pivots, and have helped me find my footing as a volunteer through the organization. I’m endlessly grateful to have found myself in their orbit, and I’m honored to now be part of the Scholarships Committee to help connect students to the opportunities that were so impactful for me.”

SARAH LYNCH | 2017 & 2019 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient | Recognition Program Director, Inc. Magazine



“Today, I teach writing to first-year college students at NYU’s Washington, D.C. campus. Often, I think about how these students are the same age I was when I moved to New York and how wonderful that a group full of talented and successful women saw something in me! In my life, I try to do the same for other young women. I encourage them to push forward toward their dreams. I have done many things since then, including living and working abroad, starting a family, and earning a fully funded M.F.A in Fiction at the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins. In January 2027, my first short story collection, *Villains*, will be published with Washington Writers’ Publishing House.”

SAMANTHA NEUGEBAUER | 2008 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient



“Since receiving my NYWICI scholarships, I see the effects in the professional connections I have today. My fellow recipients and I are still in touch, and I love reuniting with them at in-person events. Because of NYWICI, I have gained insight from talented women in the industry, fostering career, and personal growth.”

SARAH NG | 2022 & 2024 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient



“Receiving a NYWICI scholarship can be summed up in one phrase: life changing. The ripple effects have been incredible. At such a young age, I have been brought into rooms that I could never have dreamed of, attended events at amazing companies (shoutout Spotify and IBM!), and met amazing female executives. Each of these experiences have been an immediate investment in myself as I grow. I often remind myself what I have learned throughout these events and connections and find myself recalling what I have learned to my colleagues in the office. NYWICI has given me the confidence to show up every day as the strong leader that I am!”

EPHEMINA NICOLAKIS | 2022 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient



“NYWICI showed me that great things happen when women support women. I have tried to carry that ethos throughout my career and now enjoy mentoring young journalists seeking a path in our rapidly changing industry and world.”

TANYA RIVERO | 2002 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient | Weekend Evening Anchor/Reporter WABC-TV



“I see the ripple effects of the receipt of a NYWICI scholarship showing up in my career today because it offers so many connections and wonderful people that I know will be there for me when I need advice. I am also ready and willing to assist anyone in this organization.”

SOFIA STORROW | 2025 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient



“21 years ago, NYWICI supported my path to becoming a first-generation college graduate. Inspired by the power of education in my own life, I co-founded She’s the First, a nonprofit that has helped nearly a million girls globally be educated, respected, and heard (and I did it alongside a fellow scholarship winner, Christen Brandt!) Our impact is about to grow exponentially in 2026, through a merger with Girl Rising. NYWICI taught me the power of collaboration over competition, and that shines through everything I do.”

TAMMY TIBBETTS | 2005 & 2006 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient
Co-Founder, She’s the First | Chief Advisor, Girl Rising



“Receiving a NYWICI scholarship started my life on a journey that has taken me places I never imagined. What I have achieved educationally and career-wise would not have been possible without the love and support of NYWICI. This sisterhood will last me a lifetime, and I’m forever grateful to be a part of it.”

LEIGH ANNE TIFFANY | 2015 & 2019 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient
Communication Program Manager at the District of Columbia Courts



“As a NYWICI veteran, I have to say that receiving a scholarship more than two decades ago served several purposes. But the main one was instilling belief in my dreams—a validation that this working-class kid needed. I grew up in a tiny apartment in Brooklyn, New York, and wasn’t sure that big opportunities were meant for kids like me. Now I’m a bestselling author of children’s books and working with one of the top publishers in the world. My start as a NYWICI scholarship recipient drove home the fact that anyone can do anything with the right support and encouragement. NYWICI allowed kids like me to dream.”

CHRISTINA WYMAN | 2000 NYWICI Scholarship Recipient
USA Today bestselling author of middle grade novels *Jawbreaker*, *Slouch*,
and *Breakout* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Younger Readers)



Congratulations

to the 2026 NYWICI Matrix Honorees

People Inc. salutes the women who are making a difference, building community and inspiring the next generation of female leaders.

People Inc.



NYWICI



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