

For Immediate Release

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**Liz Benjamin, Moriah Formica and Madison VanDenberg Headline
 The Women's Press Club of New York State's 2019 Awardees**

***Susan Mehalick, Leah Dunaief, Deborah Sturm Rausch and Ken Lovett also to receive awards;
 Kaitlyn Tambasco to receive the Annual Betty Flood Morrow Women's Press Club of NYS Scholarship
 at Sept. 12 dinner***



Liz Benjamin
Hall of Honor

Susan Mehalick
Media Person of the Year

Lean Dunaief
Excellence in Career Achievement

Deborah Sturm Rausch
Excellence in Career Achievement

Moriah Formica
Woman in the Media

Madison VanDenberg
Woman in the Media

Ken Lovett
Standing O!

Kaitlyn Tambasco
2019 Scholarship Winner

ALBANY, N.Y. -- The Women's Press Club of New York State (WPCNYS) will confer its awards on local and statewide persons of distinction at the WPCNYS' Annual Awards and Scholarship Dinner at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 12, at the Red Lion Hotel Albany, located in Colonie.

Liz Benjamin, former host of Capital Tonight on Time Warner News/Spectrum News, will be inducted into the prestigious Hall of Honor, joining the ranks of many other notable women including Chris Jansing (2017), Benita Zahn (2016), Liz Bishop (2015), the late Judy Sanders (2014), Jill Abramson (2012) and Barbara Walters (2011).

Ticket sales are open to the public, as well as to WPCNYS members. Everyone is welcome, and one does not need to be a member of the media or in the field of journalism to attend. Tickets are \$50 for members and \$55 for non-members. Please note that tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations may be made online by Sept. 3 at <https://womenspressclubnys.com/events>

About this year's honorees:

Liz Benjamin - 2019 Hall of Honor Inductee

The Hall of Honor was established in 1997 to honor Newswomen of Distinction who have charted the course for others and helped to shape our field. It is the highest award given by The Women's Press Club of NYS.



Benjamin's journalism career has spanned more than two decades. Her work has appeared on a variety of platforms including newspapers, television and websites. Before becoming Albany managing director for Marathon Strategies and joining the new website Civ Mix, she spent nine years with Time Warner Cable News/Spectrum News. She hosted Capital Tonight, a landmark show about state politics and policy, and was editor of its companion

blog, State of Politics. Before that, she was a reporter and blogger for the New York Daily News and for the Times Union in Albany, where she helped to launch the Capitol Confidential blog.

Susan Mehalick – Media Person of the Year

This award recognizes the accomplishments of a person who is active in print or broadcast journalism in New York State.



Mehalick holds dual roles at the Times Union in Albany as a city desk editor, directing local coverage, and as executive editor of Women@Work, a vibrant network of women in business and the workplace. She has more than 30 years of journalism experience.

Leah Dunaief – 2019 Excellence in Career Achievement Award

This award recognizes a person whose body of work has been consistent and has inspired others.



Publisher of the Times Beacon Record Newspapers on Long Island, Dunaief started the Village Times in 1976 and expanded the company to include several other publications. She is a past president of the New York Press Association and has received numerous honors, including being named One of the 50 Most Influential Women in Business on Long Island in 2011.

Deborah Sturm Rausch – 2019 Excellence in Career Achievement Award

This award recognizes a person whose body of work has been consistent and has inspired others.



Rausch is a veteran professional with more than three decades of experience in public relations, internal and external communication, media relations, government public affairs, strategic planning and nonprofit leadership. She served in government as statewide director of communications and public affairs for various State agencies and held the same position for the City of Albany. The recipient of many honors, she currently is the international editor of Connections, the newsletter of the Descendants of Jewish Citizens of Augsburg, Germany. A previous two-term WPCNYS president, she serves as a vice president for the club.

Moriah Formica and Madison VanDenberg - 2019 Woman in the Media Award

This award recognizes contributions of women in public life who have presented a positive image in the media.



As a 17-year-old junior at Shaker High School in Colonie, Moriah Formica (L) appeared in 2017 on “The Voice,” making it into the playoff rounds. Also a Shaker High student, Madison VanDenberg (R) took third place on “American Idol” earlier this year. Both continue to perform. These two young musicians each captured national audiences and media attention with their performances in televised talent competition programs.

They appeared together in June at the Times Union Center in Albany, and continue to inspire young people, especially young women, with their energy and passion in pursuit of their dreams.

Ken Lovett – Standing O!

The Standing O! Award recognizes a person for achievements and contributions in the field of journalism outside of the other award categories.



Lovett spent 25 years covering the state Capitol in Albany, including a decade with the New York Daily News, where he was bureau chief. He also worked for the New York Post, Watertown Times and Bergen Record. He is now vice president for communications and Albany director for Metropolitan Public Strategies.

Kaitlyn Tambasco – 2019 Betty Flood Morrow Women’s Press Club of NYS Scholarship Winner
Created in 1967, the \$1,000 scholarship is presented annually to a student in the communications field who is a resident of New York state, enrolled full-time in a college or university located within New York.



A senior at Utica College, Tambasco is studying communications and criminal justice. She has been involved in her college’s newspaper “The Tangerine,” since her freshman year, where she began as a writer for the online team and has worked her way up to managing editor this year. Tambasco is a two-time Syracuse Press Award winner. She also has her own freelance platform, where she writes on a variety of topics. Tambasco plans to get her master’s degree in public relations.

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About the Women’s Press Club of New York State, Inc.

The Women’s Press Club of New York State, Inc. is a nonprofit organization formed in 1966 by a small group of women journalists committed to supporting women in journalism and communications. Today, the organization’s members include women and men who work for radio and television stations, digital media, newspapers, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private companies, as well as freelance writers, entrepreneurs and students. The WPCNYS provides support, professional development, programming, mentoring and networking opportunities for New Yorkers in the field. Further information may be found either on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wpcnys> or the WPCNYS website at <https://womenspressclubnys.com>.