The background is a deep blue color, decorated with intricate white paper-cut style floral and leaf patterns. These patterns are scattered across the top and bottom edges, framing the central text. A horizontal green band runs across the middle of the page, behind the central text box.

**Women of
Distinction**
Awards Ceremony

 2025 

Women of Distinction Awards Ceremony

HONOREES

Katherine Mittiga

EDUCATION



Theresa Harris

VOLUNTEERISM



Laurel Flanagan

COMMUNITY/CIVIC AFFAIRS



Deana B. Ingram

BUSINESS



Tania Lyons

HEALTHCARE

A decorative border with a repeating pattern of white leaves and small berries on a grey background, framing the central white text area.

Welcome...

... to the 127th NYS
Assembly District's
Women of Distinction
Awards Ceremony!

The month of March marks the recognition of International Women's Day – a time to honor the feats of the amazing women around the world. For our community we also take time to celebrate local women whose selflessness, leadership, and inspiration serve as testaments to this globally renowned holiday.

Our community is made stronger by recognizing and celebrating the people who make a difference – especially those whose efforts may go unnoticed. Each awardee is an outstanding woman who shines brightly in her own way, lighting the path and inspiring others to follow in her footsteps. It is an honor to shine a spotlight and applaud these five distinguished individuals for their exceptional works of service, heart, and leadership.

Each of the women we celebrate here today is truly a Woman of Distinction!





EDUCATION

Katherine Mittiga

A dedicated and compassionate teacher since 2007, Katherine Mittiga is the ultimate role model and advocate for her students. Mittiga teaches honors chemistry to her students at her alum high school, East Syracuse Minoa Central. She serves as a mentor for her school's Science Olympiad program, American Chemical Society's Chemistry Club, Honors Earth Science Symposium, and Frontiers of Science with Syracuse University. Katherine has been previously recognized for her outstanding leadership in education, as the Technology Alliance of CNY Educator of the Year in 2023 and a New York State Master Teacher in 2017.

As an avid educator, she continually finds ways to make chemistry engaging and exciting for her students. In chemistry club, students have made their own butter, slime, shrinky-dinks, and borax crystal ornaments. Katherine offers her classroom as a safe space for her students, giving a snack, a quiet moment, or an open ear to a student in need – literally. Mittiga houses a piano in her back prep room so she can not only play for her students, but also offer a listening ear to new players. She is also often seen attending school sporting matches and assisting with school-wide events.

Outside of the classroom, Katherine served as a clean assistant to the Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup program with East Syracuse Minoa Metric Club for ten years. She also raised money for Vera House's White Ribbon Campaign and actively participates in Sandwich Saturday with We Rise Above the Streets. After graduating from East Syracuse Minoa Central High School, Katherine Mittiga went on to attain her Bachelor's in Chemistry and her Masters of Science in Education from Le Moyne College. She is a mother to twelve year-old Colin and nine year-old Sean with her husband, David.





VOLUNTEERISM

Theresa Harris

Theresa has been a member of Zonta International – a human rights organization that advocates for the advancement of women and girls around the world – for 21 years. In October of 2019 she was elected Governor, the highest leadership position in a Zonta District, coordinating the efforts of Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women (both now headquartered in Illinois) with that of District 2 clubs located in New York State and in Ottawa and Montreal Canada as well. Zonta International divides the world into 32 districts.

In 2022, Ms. Harris was appointed by the President of Zonta International to the position of global Membership Committee Chair, a 2-year term, where she & her committee invigorated membership growth around the world and in her backyard. She was instrumental in establishing a Zonta club in Brewerton, NY “Friends For Equality.” The club serves the local community by mentoring the next generation, providing educational awards, and supporting youth centers. They also actively work to eliminate gender-based violence, educate themselves and others on the adverse effects of climate change on women.

As a Zonta member, Ms. Harris advocates for women and girls. Outside of her incredible volunteerism for women’s rights, Theresa can be seen at the CanTeen Center helping create a safe space for teens and young adults..

When she is not Volunteering, she might be found traveling the world, reading, cooking or baking (she became a “sourdough bread” master during the pandemic) or simply enjoying music and the company of friends/family. She and her husband together have 4 married children and they simple adore time with their 4 grandchildren.





COMMUNITY/CIVIC AFFAIRS

Laurel Flanagan

Laurel Flanagan is an inspirational advocate whose contributions extend to various areas across the community. In 2022, Flanagan was elected CEO of Operation Northern Comfort (ONC), a CNY organization of volunteers dedicated to helping their neighbors. Under her leadership, ONC volunteers have installed wheelchair ramps and fixed bathrooms for those with mobility challenges, as well as building desks and bookcases for students in need. Her ability to unite volunteers across Central New York to come together on shared missions has had endless positive contributions on the community.

Laurel also serves as the Operations & Facilities Manager at the Fayetteville Free Library. For the past nineteen years, she has managed the library's facilities, creating an inclusive and welcoming space for library-goers to thrive. Laurel also leads several community programs related to her work at the library, including her organization of Buy Nothing events to encourage resource-sharing and her upkeep of the Little Free Libraries all throughout the town of Fayetteville.

Laurel has also spearheaded dozens of disaster relief trips across the Eastern United States. After the blizzards that overtook Buffalo and the disaster of Hurricane Ian, she was present at the scene, ready to help where she could. For the last four years, Laurel has served as Secretary for PGR Foundation Inc., an organization committed to mentoring young women in Central New York. There she coordinates the Girls in Nature and Learn to Sew classes for students. As well as the PGR Foundation, Laurel acts as a steward for the Forest Fire Lookout Association on Stillwater and Berry Hill Fire Towers. A passionate hiker, skier, and reader, Laurel Flanagan is most proud of her family, Mike, John, and Rebecca.





BUSINESS

Deana Bollinger Ingram

Deana Bollinger Ingram is a trailblazer in the real estate business, providing exceptional service to her clients throughout her real estate career and extending her knowledge to the community as a teacher in homeownership.

Deana launched her real estate career in the mid-1980s, going on to join her family-owned real estate business in 2009. Later in 2012, Ingram went in on a partnership to purchase the franchise Weichert Realtor's-The Bollinger Group, expanding her reach and further serving the real estate community. In 2019, she decided to increase her involvement by joining the Greater Syracuse Association of Realtors and the NYS Association of Realtors, rising from a volunteer to a board member. She also serves as a board director of the Women's Council of Realtors, the Manlius Senior Activity Center, and the New York State Association of Realtors Board of Directors, as well as an advisory board member of SUNY Morrisville. Serving as a teacher at Home Headquarters for eleven years, Deana utilizes her vast knowledge and experience in real estate to teach a Homebuyer Education course, helping first-time home buyers realize the dream of home ownership.

Outside her accomplishments in the real estate community, Ingram co-founded a Facebook group called East Side Moms, supporting new parents, and participating in community affairs around Syracuse. East Side Moms not only promotes events and special spots around Syracuse to enjoy with the family, but also provides an irreplaceable network of support and solidarity. Deana and her friends began the group in 2004, later expanding their community to over 15,000 people. A wife and a mother to twin girls, Deana demonstrates a great devotion strengthening CNY's real estate community.





HEALTHCARE

Tania Lyons

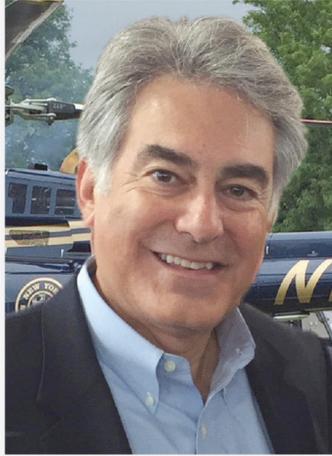
Tania Lyons, LMSW, MHA is a dedicated leader in the mental health space as the director of the Crisis Stabilization Services and Supports Service Director at Helio Health. Here she established a 24/7 Crisis Center, strengthening mental health support and aiming to fight stigma surrounding mental health and substance use. Tania also spearheaded the Syracuse Crisis Intervention and Prevention Program (SCIPP) in partnership with the Syracuse Police Department, enhancing 911 dispatch operations and their crisis intervention abilities.

For seventeen years, Tania has devoted herself to the medical and mental health arena across a multitude of organizations – professional and volunteer-based. Tania is an active member of the Onondaga Post-Trauma Response Team (PTRT), Onondaga County Criminal Justice Advisory Board, co-chair for the Onondaga County Crisis Intervention Team Committee, and a disaster mental health counselor for the Red Cross. She also serves on the Onondaga County Alternatives to Police Response Committee and the Syracuse Mayor’s Gun Violence Prevention Committee.

As well as being a trailblazer in crisis intervention and mental health support, Tania is published as a senior author in the Canadian Journal of Urology and a co-author in the Journal of Medical Ethics. Her work largely focuses on the disparities in organ transplantations for incarcerated populations.

A Liverpool High School graduate, Tania received her Bachelor’s in psychology from the University of Buffalo, a Master’s in Social Work from Bridgewater State University, and a Master’s in Healthcare Administration from Colorado State University. She and her husband, Greg Lyons, are parents to their two lovely daughters, Evelyn and Stella.



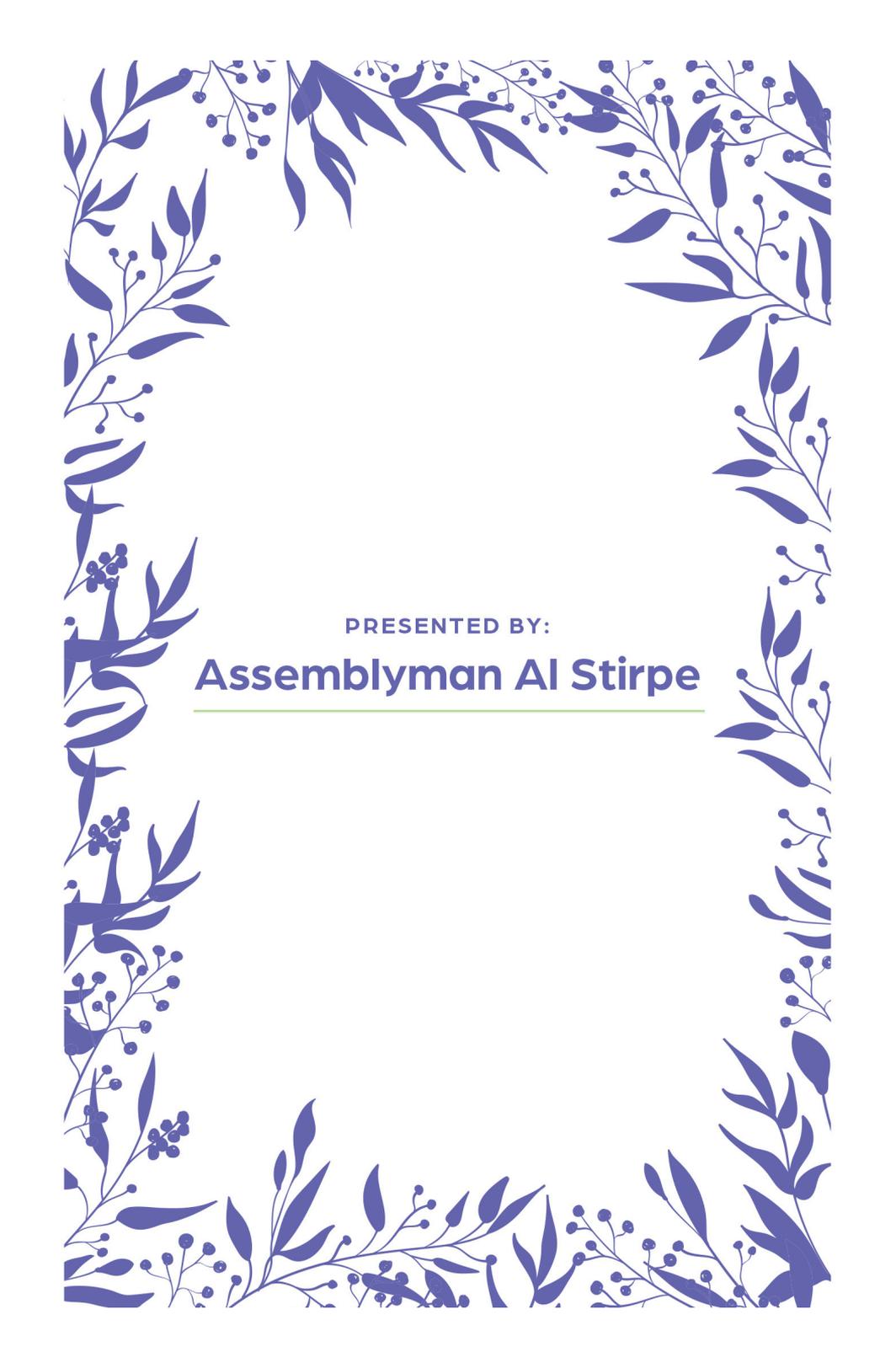


“I want to thank our honorees and all the nominees for participating in this year’s Women of Distinction Awards; a well-deserved spotlight for going above and beyond every single day to make our communities stronger.”

- ASSEMBLYMAN AL STIRPE

For more information on this or any other community issue, please contact my office at:

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PRESENTED BY:

Assemblyman Al Stirpe
