

# ICON HONORS

2018

CELEBRATING LEADERS OVER 60

A Supplement to  
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## Editor's Note



We at NJBIZ are proud to bring you the second annual ICON Honors awards celebrating New Jersey business leaders over the age of 60 who have achieved notable success both within and outside of their chosen field.

While the business world is full of successful leaders deserving of recognition – many of whom NJBIZ honors annually through various special awards programs ranging from Best Fifty Women in Business to General Counsel of the Year – our ICON honorees are in a class of their own: the pioneers and change makers who did things first and continue to kick-start innovation.

They have helped the Garden State's business community grow and they continue to champion their industry. Our 2018 ICON honorees have dedicated their careers to everything from public service, health care and some of the most influential institutions. Some are creating new businesses and jobs while others are keeping long-time businesses going and innovating. They also give back by mentoring the next generation of business leaders and by volunteering in the community.

In these pages, we've asked our ICON honorees to reflect on topics, such as how their leadership style has contributed to their success, who inspires them and what they are most passionate about. Their answers reveal a lot about what got them to the top and will hopefully inspire all of us to make a daily impact on the success our region!

Karren L. Johnson  
Editor

# 2018 ICON HONORS

## Anthony Bastardi

### Chairman and CEO

Strategic Development Group  
Fairfield, Essex County



Career span:  
35 years

**Achievements:** Bastardi has served on the boards of trustees for numerous New Jersey organizations. He is vice chairman of the board for New Jersey Public Television and is on the boards for Cristo Rey Newark High School and the Independent College Fund of New Jersey. Through the innovative public-private partnerships he has negotiated, he creates a bridge between education and development professionals, as well as government officials.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am passionate about observing what is not but could be ... and then making it happen!

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Over the past five years, we have envisioned, created and are now managing the development of several large, mixed-use urban projects in Jersey City and Newark. These projects will transform entire communities, generate hundreds of millions in economic growth and produce thousands of jobs.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I delegate and "macro-manage," not micromanage. I give praise and criticism with equal ease and candor. I reward good performance and results. I mentor and teach by example and then throw my protégés into the pool and let them sink or swim. Some sink but the few that swim turn into great human assets.

## Laura Carabello

### Chief Creative Officer

CPR Strategic Marketing Communications  
Hasbrouck Heights, Bergen County



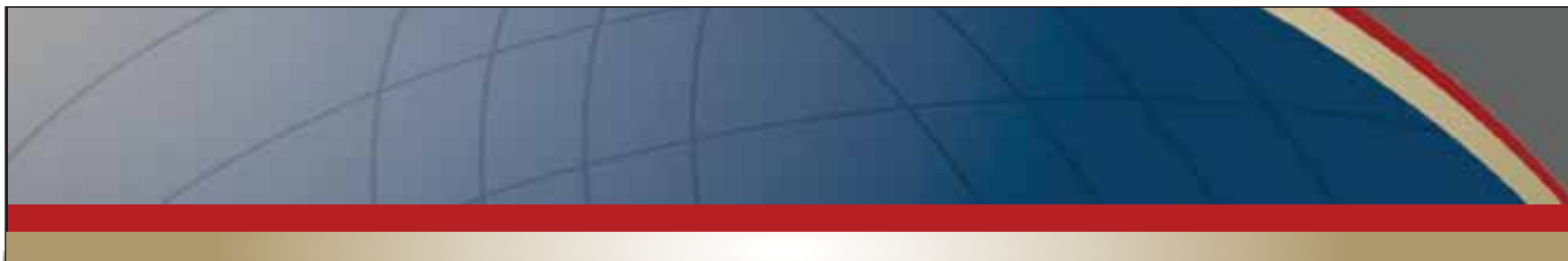
Career span:  
30+ years

**Achievements:** In her years of service to the health care business community of New Jersey, Carabello has represented some of the most highly respected health care facilities and providers of care in the state. In 2011, Carabello, also an author, published "Medical Travel Today: Opinions and Perspectives on an Industry in the Making." In 2016, she was named Person of the Year by MDA Media and in 2012 was named Humanitarian of the Year by the American Chiropractic Association.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I love medical travel and have devoted many years to advancing opportunities for companies to offer options to their employees that will offer improved access to higher quality, more cost-effective health care – wherever it is located.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Becoming an entrepreneur and being in business with my husband. I have had success at personal and professional levels and get to spend day and night with my very best friend!

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Over the years, my company has provided meaningful jobs to thousands of young people graduating with a degree in journalism or communications. We have launched many successful careers in the public relations and marketing business.



*Thank you for your leadership,  
vision & commitment.*



*Congratulations to*

*Raymond Nisivoccia,  
Nisivoccia LLP*

*and to all the 2018 Class of ICON  
Honors Award Winners.*

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## Mario M. Casabona

### Founder and Managing Director

Casabona Ventures LLC  
Kinnelon, Morris County



Career span:  
40+ years

**Achievements:** An entrepreneur and active angel investor, Casabona founded Casabona Ventures in 2007, investing in over 30 seed and early stage companies and venture funds. In 2011, he founded TechLaunch, a business accelerator, committed to identifying and nurturing early stage tech ventures by mentoring, coaching and providing access to resources and capital. To date, TechLaunch has supported over 50 tech companies, mentored over 100 budding entrepreneurs and has over 150 mentors in its network.

**Who inspires you?** High-energy, passionate entrepreneurs and innovators. Innovations and constant information is what makes my life interesting. People have lots of knowledge waiting to be shared.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Providing access to my network of like-minded individuals and associates who enjoy giving back to the tech community by mentoring and advising aspiring entrepreneurs. The goal is to create ventures, which also create jobs.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am passionate about mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs and launching new ventures. When I decided to start my business, I was fortunate to have several mentors who helped shape my career and business growth. Without them I would surely have failed. They taught me that it was all about relationships and negotiations.

## Edwin H. Cohen

### Principal Partner

Prism Capital Partners  
Bloomfield, Essex County



Career span:  
50+ years

**Achievements:** Has enjoyed a long and celebrated history of involvement in some of the largest transactions and most successful projects in the New Jersey commercial real estate marketplace; also an active member of industry organizations and serves in leadership roles in community and educational organizations.

**Who inspires you?** I greatly admire people who achieve success and then continue to do remarkable things throughout their lives. I look to people who I have known for decades who are still active in my own industry for inspiration. I'm also a huge admirer of outstanding talent in the entertainment industry.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** I have been privileged throughout my 50-plus-year career to be involved in projects that have shaped – or are shaping – New Jersey's commercial real estate landscape. As part of that, I have assisted dozens of major corporations in identifying New Jersey as a preferred place to do business, and in establishing and growing their operations here.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am totally passionate about mentoring and educating young people as they work to find their appropriate career paths. I have proudly served on the Brooklyn College Board of Trustees for more than 25 years, and as its chair for the past four years.

## Jerry Creighton, Sr.

### Managing Partner

The Creighton Group  
Randolph, Morris County



Career span:  
48 years

**Achievements:** Successful in building brand recognition for the Enterprise Development Center (EDC) and its host campus, the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). He created an ecosystem to provide resources for education, entrepreneurial mentoring, coaching, access to capital and business commercialization. Creighton also is the co-founder of the NJIT Highlanders Angel Network, with the focus of helping venture companies find funding opportunities.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Spending more than a decade creating an environment to foster the education and mentoring of entrepreneurs, students and business owners who are looking to commercialize and grow their businesses.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I believe that highly motivated entrepreneurs can find a way! I believe that a properly coached entrepreneur can turn ideas into successful enterprises if they know how to deal with both opportunities and obstacles. History has demonstrated that all successful entrepreneurs have had their milestone successes and failures in all stages of growth.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I have an inclusive, team-oriented leadership style. I surround myself with team members who possess complementary skills and capabilities to maximize team performance.

## Stan Danzig

### Vice Chairman

Cushman & Wakefield  
East Rutherford, Bergen County



Career span:  
37 years

**Achievements:** Recently winning NAIOP NJ's 2018 Industry Service Award for his substantial contributions in support of the commercial and industrial real estate industry's goals. He consistently has earned Cushman & Wakefield's Top 100 ranking for overall production, landing in the top 10 multiple times and once taking the top spot in the tri-state region.

**Who inspires you?** My colleagues at Cushman & Wakefield – from the brokers, consultants and management – are my greatest source of inspiration. Every day, I see how hard they work, how smart and competent they are, and how that translates into success.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** During my career with Cushman & Wakefield, we have brought a number of major developers into the New Jersey market, helping them to create a solid business base. Through our work with these developers, we have enabled them to expand their businesses, contributing to their further successes and the New Jersey business community as a whole.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I am a strong believer in setting people up for success through preparation, then giving them the ball and letting them run with it. I make it clear that my team can always come to me with questions, but I won't be constantly looking over their shoulders.

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## 2018 ICON Honors Award Winners



In a place where urban vitality and suburban flexibility meet, a new kind of community is on the rise.

With master planning underway, ON3 represents New Jersey's largest contemplated redevelopment right in the heart of the Northeast's thriving life science corridor. Spanning the Township of Nutley and the City of Clifton, ON3 is expected to serve as a showplace for the "new urbanist" philosophy that is driving suburban municipalities to reimagine and redesign their downtowns and commercial corridors for 24/7 convenience living.

This ambitious initiative hopes to transform the former ROCHE campus into a next-generation lifestyle hub that will integrate an appropriate mix of office, R&D, residential and retail along with potential lodging and entertainment concepts. ON3 has already attracted a wide array of users that will become part of the fabric of the communities for the long-term. This world-class campus hopes to evolve into a place to live, work, learn or just be you without sacrificing a thing.



## Kathleen Davis

### Executive Vice President/COO

Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey  
Voorhees, Camden County



Career span:  
23 years

**Achievements:** Chosen to serve on Gov. Christie's Privatization Task Force in 2010 and Camden City Mayor Dana Redd's transition team in 2009. Most recently received NJBIZ's Top 50 Women in Business in 2015 and Rowan University's Alumni Ambassador Award in 2016. Currently serves as the Secretary of the South Jersey Chamber Foundation, which facilitates the South Jersey Summer Institute for Educators.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am totally passionate about health and fitness. I am a true believer in the link between mind, body and spirit. Keeping it all balanced helps one be the best they can be at work, at home and in the community.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** The best decision I made during my career was to come on board at the CCSNJ. I learn something new every day in my job; meet thousands of wonderful people, including some of the most prominent leaders in business and government; and get to work with a great team – all of whom are women! Having the opportunity to serve the business community and support them in creating and retaining jobs makes me feel like in some small way I am making a difference.

**You'd never guess that...** I love road trips! Over the years, my husband and I have traveled across the country several times, including with our son when he was younger and, most recently, with our dog.

## Steven Denholtz

### CEO

Denholtz Associates  
Matawan, Monmouth County



Career span:  
35 years

**Achievements:** Growing Denholtz from a small operation to employing more than 60 real estate professionals and doubling the square footage it owns and manages across its portfolio in New Jersey, Illinois and Florida. Led Denholtz in winning the prestigious Outstanding Building of the Year Award from the Building Owners and Managers Association for 30 Montgomery St., a Class A office building in Jersey City.

**Who inspires you?** Over 65 years ago, my father founded Denholtz Associates. As a veteran, his first projects focused on the construction of single-family homes for veterans returning home from World War II. As I entered the industry, I took note of his steadfast commitment to creating projects in line with the needs of the community.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Choosing to enter the real estate business; I have been able to bring projects to life across New Jersey and provide thousands of my fellow residents with places to work and live, while carrying on the proud tradition of my family's business.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Our focus on ethical and responsible real estate investment has allowed our team to deliver projects that provide homes for a wide variety of businesses while also bringing opportunities for gainful employment to our local communities.



# CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU LEONARD GREEN

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## Leonard C. Green

### Chairman and Founder

The Green Group  
Woodbridge, Middlesex County



Career span:  
45 years

**Achievements:** Served on the board of many New Jersey-based charities. Currently serves as a member of The NJ Tech Council and is a long-time member of the NJCPA. Received the Appel Award for outstanding contributions to the entrepreneurial spirit in academia in 2001 and is listed in "Who's Who in U.S. College Professors."

**Who inspires you?** There are many people who inspire me. In my book, "The Entrepreneur's Playbook," I acknowledge over 20 people who have positively influenced my life, from rabbis, businessmen, fellow employees and people fighting diseases. Most of all my wife, Lois, and my family will always be my biggest inspirations.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** My real passion in life is educating the next generation to handle any challenge that is thrown their way. You cannot predict the future, so you must teach students to not just think outside of the box, but to problem-solve and take calculated risks.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** The Green Group supports many New Jersey charities with both money and personal assistance such as Jeremy's Heroes, local food drives, adopting needy families during the holidays and providing informational speaking sessions for New Jersey-based organizations and colleges.

## Anthony Gruppo

### CEO

Marsh & McLennan Agency Northeast Region  
Saddle Brook, Bergen County



Career span:  
36 years

**Achievements:** A visionary and an innovative leader, proven sales and marketing professional, an author, and highly sought-after keynote speaker in national and international arenas. Most recently serves as a guest speaker and mentor for graduate students at New York University. Started a leadership podcast entitled, "The Roots of Leadership," in which he interviews America's entrepreneurs, leaders and visionaries, helping to bring exposure to and achieve their vision, while assisting nonprofits.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** I have curated and implemented my proprietary consultative model, "Six Degrees," which has been proven to be extremely effective and applicable to any organization or individual. This model offers a targeted approach to uncover challenges and create effective solutions. Implementing, educating others on, and sharing this model have led to many personal and professional accomplishments.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** A servant leader; I am heavily involved in developing and sustaining relationships and bring a consultative mindset to the unique needs of our colleagues, clients and community.

**You'd never guess that...** I'm the author and publisher of five books. I also write poetry. In my 20s, I worked as a repo man.



Congratulations to our friend and colleague

## Daniel A. Schwartz

Managing Member | 2018 NJBIZ ICON HONORS Recipient  
for his enduring commitment to the legal industry  
and his community



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## Alan Hammer

### Member

Brach Eichler LLC  
Roseland, Essex County



Career span:  
47 years

**Achievements:** Received numerous awards over the years, recognizing his knowledge in the real estate and the multifamily housing sector. He has been recognized by his peers in Best Lawyers for 12 years and by New Jersey Super Lawyers for 12 years. He was recognized as a Top Legal Leader for New York and New Jersey by American Legal Media in 2015.

**Who inspires you?** My father, Morris Hammer. He was a well-regarded apartment house broker and investor and the founding principal of Gebroe-Hammer Associates. I am inspired by his common sense and determination and how he worked through and solved the challenges that arose in all aspects of life, be it business or personal.

**How has the business climate changed since you started and how have the changes shaped your business?** I believe the legal climate that I operate in has changed in the sense that it is much more adversarial and much less congenial and trusting. In this environment, during every transaction, my team and I strive to bring a high level of professionalism and service to all parties in order to get the deal done and meet our clients' objectives.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I believe very strongly in leading by example and working hard to facilitate consensus within my team.

## Lynne Katzmann

### Founder and CEO

Juniper Communities  
Bloomfield, Essex County



Career span:  
35 years

**Achievements:** For her dedication, vision and outstanding achievements, Katzmann was named a winner of the CEO Today Business Women of the Year Awards 2018. She was recognized as a Leading Woman Entrepreneur in 2013 and received the New York Smart CEO Brava Award in 2014.

**Who inspires you?** Oma, my grandmother, ran her own business in the 1920s, rode a motorcycle in her mid-70s and was always ready to share her laughter, wisdom and sheer love of life. Inspired by her example, I founded a company based on a vision of aging that sees us alive in every season of life. Oma's story has become Juniper's shared inspiration.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** It's very rewarding to deliver speeches to share my vision and insights for leaders of tomorrow, but it's even more rewarding to deliver results. I'm proud that many of my signature programs are making a positive impact in New Jersey through groundbreaking advances in the long term care environment, reducing employee turnover, enhancing retention and improving quality of service through employee education programs.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** My work in transforming health care and providing the elderly with the highest-quality long-term care has instilled a passionate belief that we need to take a stance against ageism in society.



The entire team at Denholtz Associates proudly congratulates our CEO

## STEVEN DENHOLTZ

on his 2018 NJBIZ ICON Award.

Along with the New Jersey business community, we applaud Steven for his steadfast commitment and tireless hard work in making New Jersey a better place to live, work and play throughout his distinguished career.

We also offer our sincere congratulations to each of Steven's fellow recipients of the 2018 NJBIZ ICON Awards.

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65  
years

## Michael Kempner

### Founder and CEO

MWWPR

East Rutherford, Bergen County



Career span:  
31 years

**Achievements:** Honored with several of the PR industry's highest accolades, including PR Week's PR Professional of the Year in 2015 and 2010. Elected the chairman of the board of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce in 2018. An active member of his community and active in progressive politics and issues.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** My entire adult life has been dedicated towards advancing the lives of the people of New Jersey. From working for progressive policies to help those in need to building New Jersey's first – and only – truly national public relations agency. When we started in 1986, critics said we couldn't build a world-class agency in New Jersey. We proved them wrong.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** The transformation of our business to being a digitally focused and integrated communications firm. Being employee-centric and growing great careers for our people while providing disruptive programs for our clients to build and grow their businesses.

**How has the business climate changed since you started and how have the changes shaped your business?** Our business today has very little resemblance to what it looked like when we started. We began our climb before computers; we just had electric typewriters. Today we are a digitally centric firm that provides integrated services to clients across the world.

## Gordon Litwin

### Co-Chairman

Hackensack Meridian Health  
Edison, Middlesex County



Career span:  
25+ years

**Achievements:** Helped to lead initiatives that advance treatment and research and will train physicians of the future at the new Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine at Seton Hall University, where he serves as a member of the board of governors. Serves an attorney and partner at Litwin & Provence LLC. He focuses his practice of law in the areas of environmental, municipal, redevelopment, real estate and commercial litigation.

**Who inspires you?** My late father, David Litwin, was an attorney, politically active as a state legislator and involved in community affairs, including as a member of a hospital board. I engaged in all three endeavors with his standards of dedication and excellence as an inspirational guidepost.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** Effective delivery of health care. I try to always remember that, in operating a health care system, our singular purpose is to serve the patient and not only maximize individual health but deliver care in the most humane manner.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I believe in collaboration and make every effort to respect all whom I encounter. I have been part of the negotiating team in over 16 significant health care mergers, five of which came to fruition, and so far, have succeeded.



## CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD CONGRATULATES



**Andy Merin**

Executive Vice Chairman



**Stan Danzig**

Vice Chairman

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## William Mentlik

### Managing Partner

Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP  
Westfield, Union County



Career span:  
45 years

**Achievements:** Under Mentlik's leadership, Lerner David now has over 60 attorneys and has navigated major changes in the law and the ever-expanding scope of new technologies.

**Who inspires you?** I am inspired by my family first and foremost, my friends and the people in my firm – lawyers and staff alike – with whom I have had the privilege to work throughout my over 40 years in private practice.

**I learned the hard way that...** There is far more to the “business” of law than simply being a good lawyer. The skills required to manage and maintain a successful law practice are not taught in law school. In most cases, they are learned “on the job,” by seeing and making mistakes, and figuring out how to correct them.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** My personal leadership style has always been to try and create a team atmosphere to address and resolve business challenges. Having grown up in a family that owned and operated a small business, and having joined my firm at a time when we were only six lawyers strong, I have been fortunate to be able to seek and obtain valuable input from my firm's entire workforce. It has taught me to listen and never discount anything that anyone has to say, and to value the opinions of all when making decisions that impact, at one level or another, the interests of everyone who is part of our organization.

## Andrew Merin

### Executive Vice Chairman

Cushman & Wakefield  
East Rutherford, Bergen County



Career span:  
46 years

**Achievements:** He has consistently ranked in the top one or two percent of all brokers for production throughout his career with Cushman & Wakefield and has received a number of the firm's highest honors.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am truly passionate about representing my clients. I view my job as that of an adviser and fiduciary, always acting in the best interest of my clients. I put myself in their shoes and act as I would on my own behalf.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** I have two “best” decisions that have shaped my career. One was to hire David Bernhaut, who has been my partner for 31 years. My other “best” decision was shifting from a very successful career as an office leasing transaction specialist to investment sales and establishing Cushman & Wakefield's Investment Sales Group in 1987.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** When it comes to leadership, I believe in combining training and guidance for my team members with the opportunity for them to learn on their own as well. The more an individual rises to the challenge, the more responsibility I give him or her.

**You'd never guess that...** My initial career plan was to become an English professor.

# GIBBONS



Mr. Zazzali joined Gibbons in 2007 after retiring as Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. His decades of dedicated public service prior to his service on the bench included, among other positions, serving as New Jersey

Attorney General, General Counsel for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, Chairman of the New Jersey State Commission of Investigation, and Chief of the Appeals Division of the Office of the Essex County Prosecutor.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO JAMES R. ZAZZALI

*Of Counsel in the Gibbons Commercial & Criminal Litigation Department*

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## Raymond Nisivoccia

### Founding Partner

Nisivoccia LLP

Mount Arlington, Morris County



Career span:  
57 years

**Achievements:** Has overseen Nisivoccia LLP's growth, from inception to 20 partners and more than 80 employees. Through his influence and support of the community, approximately 26 employees serve on a for-profit or not-for-profit board or are a dedicated community volunteer.

**Who inspires you?** My father was an immigrant from Italy with no education, and although he hardly had any money, he and my mother made the opportunity for me to attend college a priority. After attending school and working for three years for another practitioner, I was ready to start my own business. My father asked me, "Well, how many customers do you have?" I told him none. He said, "You're ready. When your stomach hits your backbone, you will learn how to operate."

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** Giving back to the community that has provided me with all that I have today. I could not have become who I am or grown Nisivoccia LLP into the business that it is today without everyone in the community who has graciously helped me along the way. We have a strong firm focus on recognizing our community and participating in philanthropic activities for organizations that have supported us in our endeavors.

**I learned the hard way that...** You only get out of life what you put into it. You need to be an optimistic, positive person and look for the best in every situation.

## Mary Pomerantz

### CEO

TPG HR Services, TPG Staffing and Mary Pomerantz Advertising

Highland Park, Middlesex County



Career span:  
30+ years

**Achievements:** Acquired the highest HR certifications, including SPHR and SHRM-SCP. Responsible for aiding in the professional development of countless individuals employed by her companies. Established the Mary Pomerantz Advertising Endowed Scholarship for Rutgers University MHRM students.

**Who inspires you?** Ordinary people who face extraordinary obstacles but still find a way to live a meaningful life for themselves and those around them.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Throughout my career, I have worked to help businesses and individuals realize their potential. This has created many great employment opportunities in the State of New Jersey.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** To believe in myself and to take entrepreneurial risks every day for over 30 years.

**How has the business climate changed since you started and how have the changes shaped your business?** The world has become a global economy functioning with ever-changing technology. However, the core foundations of my businesses have remained the same – delivering what is promised with the aid of great technology and the lack of regional constraints.

To our inspirational leader,

**RALPH ALBERT THOMAS**

And our accomplished members,

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# CONGRATULATIONS

ON ACHIEVING THE **ICON HONORS** AWARD.

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## Lawrence Powers

### Partner, Co-Chair – Construction Law Department

Hoagland, Longo, Moran, Dunst & Doukas, LLP  
New Brunswick, Middlesex County



Career span:  
34 years

**Achievements:** Regularly provides AIA-NJ, NJSPE and NJASLA with affordable and regular continuing education seminars on professional liability issues. Finalist in the 2015 NJBIZ General Counsel of the Year awards program. Former planning board attorney for the boroughs of Garwood and Hopewell.

**Who inspires you?** Kind people. People who take the time to do a kindness for a stranger are becoming rarer and rarer these days, so when I see one, it inspires my continued faith in the goodness of people. Fortunately for me, my wife of 38 years, Beth, is one of the kindest people I know.

#### What is something you are totally passionate about?

I love vintage mechanical watches, due to their classic designs and the fact that a man-made machine, with hundreds of parts, can keep time almost as well as a quartz crystal. I have a large collection of vintage watches that have probably cost me more to fix than some of them are worth.

#### What is the best decision you've made during your career?

I put myself through school working construction. I learned how buildings were built and I learned how to read blueprints. Because of this experience, my decision to concentrate on construction law has really paid dividends for me, personally and professionally.

**You'd never guess that...** I am a real softie where animals are concerned. I have always had pets, and I am very attached to my Welsh Terrier, Braxton.

## Thomas Ryan

### Managing Partner

Laddey, Clark & Ryan, LLP  
Sparta, Sussex County



Career span:  
32 years

**Achievements:** Serves as a leader in the legal community and the business community, as well as in community service. He has been selected for inclusion on the list of New Jersey Super Lawyers every year since 2010.

#### What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?

Throughout my career, I have been a tireless advocate for and promoter of Sussex County and its business community. In addition to providing my legal expertise and counsel to individuals and businesses, I endeavor to be a thought leader and trigger to economic development and community enrichment.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** I am a leader who believes in team and consensus. I strive to foster mutual respect on my team and a commitment to excellence, while recognizing the value that each member contributes to the team.

#### What is the best decision you've made during your career?

Professionally, listening to my older brother's advice to align myself with my late partner, Brian Laddey. Brian introduced me into the legal community and taught me that in order to be personally and professionally fulfilled, to always act ethically, put clients and team first and to enjoy what I do and who I am doing it with. He taught me how to serve the law, our clients and the community.



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## Joseph Sanzari

### CEO

Joseph M. Sanzari, Inc.  
Hackensack, Bergen County



Career span:  
**55 years**

**Achievements:** He has been an outspoken supporter of the concept of investing in New Jersey's infrastructure to grow its economy. Over the years he has worked countless hours to raise funds for Hackensack Meridian Health, resulting in the children's hospital being named The Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital. Led a project earning him recognition as "Top 25 Newsmakers" in Engineering News-Record, McGraw Hill.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am extremely passionate about seeing my projects from groundbreaking to completion. I take pride in staying involved in each aspect of the project to ensure they are completed in a timely, safe manner. Our goal is to always minimize the impact to the traveling public and surrounding communities.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** Being hands on, visiting job sites and interacting with all employees. I am a firm believer in cultivating my workforce to remain with the company and provide employees with opportunities for advancement. A huge part of my success is my employees' loyalty and commitment to our company.

**I learned the hard way that...** I should never let someone convince me to bid and construct a project that did not seem like a good fit for me or my company. When looking at a project, if I do not feel it in my heart and gut, I learned the hard way, stay away from it.

## Daniel A. Schwartz

### Managing Member

Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi PC  
West Orange, Essex County



Career span:  
**41 years**

**Achievements:** Recognized by NJBIZ in its 2018 Power 100, a list of the state's most influential people in business (2018); Chambers USA in the areas of Corporate and Mergers and Acquisitions (2016-2017); and The Best Lawyers in America in the areas of Corporate Law, Health Care Law and Mergers & Acquisitions Law (2008-2018).

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** I encourage our team of talented attorneys to provide cost-effective and value-added services to a wide variety of New Jersey's business sectors.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am fully committed to developing the next generation of leaders at CSG so that, as those of us who have been with the firm for 40-plus years retire, CSG will continue to flourish and be even more successful than it is today.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** After working at a large New Jersey law firm, I joined a 16-member firm in West Orange called Wolff & Samson. It has been so rewarding being a part of the firm as it has grown through the years to 135 attorneys and 250 total employees, serving the New Jersey and New York business communities with a wide array of services. Our re-branding to CSG has been especially exciting.



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**Congratulates Mr. Joseph M. Sanzari!**

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## Judith Sheft

### Associate Vice President Technology and Enterprise Development

New Jersey Innovation Institute @ NJIT  
Newark, Essex County



Career span:  
17 years

**Achievements:** Received the NJIT Overseers award for service in 2009, the NJIT Constance A. Murray Diversity Award in 2017, the NJTC Marinson-Ballen Technology Supporter Award in 2017, was recognized in 2012 as the “Garden State Woman of the Year” in the professional services category, and in 2015 was named one of the “Best 50 Women in Business” by NJBIZ.

**Who inspires you?** I am inspired by Malala, the girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban. Her courage to persevere to achieve her goals is truly inspiring. She was willing to take risks to advance herself and others within her community.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I am passionate about advancing innovation at our universities. Thinking about new ways to address problems that we don't even recognize is one aspect of academic research. In my work at NJII, I get the opportunity to work with our talented faculty and students and help them explore commercialization of their inventions. It is motivating to watch them develop as they begin to integrate business elements with their scientific work.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Joining a carpool at Bell Labs – my first employer. I met my husband in the carpool and we have been happily married for 38 years.

## Charles Stanziale

### Partner

McCarter & English  
Newark, Essex County



Career span:  
51 years

**Achievements:** Served on the judicial selection committees for the Bankruptcy Court and the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. Chambers USA recognized him in Band 1 – its highest honor – from 2011 through 2018. Received The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

**Who inspires you?** My dad, Charles, and my father-in-law, Peter Rodino. My dad came up the hard way, worked his way through law school and to serve as a state assemblyman and a federal prosecutor. My father-in-law was a congressman for 40 years, led the impeachment of Nixon, co-wrote the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976, helped thousands of people with immigration issues, and was in Gen. Patton's tank corps in North Africa.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Becoming a municipal court judge in Newark in the late '70s. You could actually make a difference in a city that needed all the help it could get at the time. It was so much more than putting people away; it was solving people's problems every day. It was such a meaningful thing to me.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** That's simple: Treat people the way you want to be treated. It's the Golden Rule.

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
to all  
ICON Award winners



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## Pete Taft

### CEO and Managing Partner

Taft Communications

Lawrenceville, Mercer County



Career span:  
35 years

**Achievements:** A former journalist and political consultant, Taft provides insightful communications counsel to organizations and leaders throughout the Garden State. He has developed and executed strategic communications plans for numerous for-profit and not-for-profit clients, including universities, foundations, politicians, TV executives, high-technology firms and health care and biotech companies. An expert in global leadership, he has personally coached upwards of 1,500 senior executives on delivering mission-critical messages to key audiences in fields from pharmaceuticals to health care companies to Fortune 500 industries;

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Having the opportunity to offer employment to several dozen of the most interesting, talented and principled people on the face of the earth. They're the keys to our success. And to know that we've helped them and their families in some small way is immensely gratifying.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** Watching people blossom. There is nothing more exciting than challenging someone, kicking them out of the nest, and watching them soar. I will never, ever get tired of that.

**You'd never guess that...** I still play drums in my college rock 'n' roll band.

## Ralph Albert Thomas

### CEO and Executive Director

NJCPA

Roseland, Essex County



Career span:  
40+ years

**Achievements:** Thomas is a lifetime member and former national and chapter president of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), where he has received numerous awards. He was selected for the last seven years by Accounting Today as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting."

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I believe it's crucial to keep the CPA pipeline alive and kicking. Young professionals today need some assistance in knowing what the industry is all about, in how they can make the most of their degree and in having a successful career in a changing environment. That said, it's equally important to have a more inclusive workforce. Diversity in the workforce helps improve client service, bring more ideas to the table and find better solutions to problems, data shows.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Leaving a larger corporate environment to run a smaller nonprofit group is how I felt I could really make a difference. It was a life-altering experience.

**I learned the hard way that...** I learned the hard way that listening first is always the best policy compared to reacting to something. Whether it's a small issue, a staffing issue or one that impacts the whole industry, listening first is always the best way to handle it.

# Congratulations to

**Mary Pomerantz**, MHRM SPHR  
SHRM-SCP

## 2018 NJBIZ ICON Honors Award Recipient

As the founder & CEO of  
Mary Pomerantz Advertising,  
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NJ businesses adapt, grow  
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We salute her continuing contributions  
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## Joan Verplanck

### President

Profit by Association  
Pennington, Mercer County



Career span:  
39 years

**Achievements:** Verplanck has been recognized by numerous awards, including Women's Political Caucus Women of Vision award and the Spirit of Edison Community Leadership award. Led the way in the quest to increase diversity on boards of directors in New Jersey. Verplanck recently stepped up and chaired the 2018 Women's Summit.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** I believe that refocusing and revitalizing the state chamber enabled the organization to grow and brought more individuals and ideas to the public policy table, which is good for everyone involved.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** I decided early on to hire the best talent I could afford, understanding that they could present a challenge. Smart people are a gift, and I was blessed with many of them at the chamber. Finding those who are smart and able to see multiple points of view are rare, but I had them and many stayed with the organization for the 15-plus years I served, and at least one still remains.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** Hire really, really smart people, make sure they understand where you're trying to go, be available to them along the way (my door was always open), and turn them loose. In general people stay motivated and on task, often times delivering way above their pay grade.

## Byron Yake

### Founder and Executive Director

Write on Sports, Inc.  
South Orange, Essex County



Career span:  
35 years

**Achievements:** Yake was awarded the New Jersey Jefferson Award in 2009 for his work with Write on Sports and named a Purpose Prize Fellow in 2015 for his contributions to education and youth through WoS. The Heisman Trophy Trust, a WoS donor, has twice invited Yake and two WoS students to attend its annual gala.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** My biggest contribution is taking an idea and turning it into a valuable, and growing, literacy program for at-risk youth about a subject they love – sports.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I love any sport that has the name Pittsburgh attached to it. As a kid, I followed the Steelers, Pirates, Pittsburgh Hornets (Penguins) and Pitt, then had the great fortune of covering all of them as a sports writer. To-day I'm free to be a total fan.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** Going into journalism and the news business was the best decision. It gave me a front-row seat to so many memorable events, both sports and non-sports. (I wish I could have learned earlier to write by participating in a program like Write on Sports!)

**I learned the hard way that...** The goal is wonderful but the process is even better.

## Pete Taft, you've always been our icon!

Your vision, leadership, and values make our firm what it is today. The best is yet to come!



The Taft team congratulates all the ICON honorees!

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## James R. Zazzali

### Of Counsel, Commercial and Criminal Litigation Department

Gibbons P.C.  
Newark, Essex County



Career span:  
56 years

**Achievements:** Zazzali was named chief justice of the state Supreme Court in 2006 by Gov. Jon Corzine, a position he held until stepping down in 2007 at the mandatory retirement age. He was first appointed to the court by Gov. Christine Todd Whitman in 2000 and became one of the state's most admired jurists, exceptionally committed to fairness, especially to children, the elderly, the poor and workers.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the New Jersey business community?** Improving labor – management relations.

**What is something you are totally passionate about?** I believe that it is essential in today's culture that every effort be made by leaders in public and private sectors to harmonize and to reconcile, fairly, the interests of society and organizations with human rights.

**What is the best decision you've made during your career?** To answer public service.

**I learned the hard way that...** When making a decision, one should gather all relevant information, decide the matter, and then, most of all, forget about it.

**Describe your leadership style and how it has helped you be successful.** Lead by example and always consider the concerns of colleagues and subordinates.

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## *Congratulations to our 2018 ICON Award Honoree*

The 2018 *NJBIZ* ICON Honors Awards program recognizes New Jersey business leaders over the age of 60 for their notable success and demonstration of strong leadership within and outside of their chosen field.

We're thrilled to see our own Gordon N. Litwin honored for his inspiring and exemplary work — benefitting not only Hackensack Meridian *Health*, but the communities in our care.



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